

The changing face of Fruit in Schools: The 2008 case studies

Final Healthy Futures evaluation report

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Table of contents

Executive summary	v
1. Introduction to the 2008 case studies	1
1.1 Introduction to the Healthy Futures evaluation	1
1.2 Selecting the schools	1
1.3 Ethics and confidentiality	2
1.4 Report structure	3
2. Themes from the 2008 case studies	5
2.1 Involving more people in leading change	5
2.2 Becoming a “Healthy School”	5
<i>Using HPS processes and creating health teams</i>	6
<i>Empowering student leaders</i>	6
2.3 Addressing the three arms of the HPS framework	7
(1) <i>School organisation and ethos</i>	7
(2) <i>Curriculum, teaching and learning</i>	8
(3) <i>Community links and partnerships</i>	8
2.4 Changes to school practice linked to the FiS areas	10
<i>Healthy eating changes and impacts</i>	10
<i>Physical activity changes and impacts</i>	11
<i>Sunsmart changes and impacts</i>	12
<i>Smokefree changes and impacts</i>	12
<i>Changes and impacts beyond the four FiS health areas</i>	12
2.5 Student, parent and whānau perspectives on change	13
2.6 The wider health and education environment	14
2.7 Sustainability	15
2.8 Summary and where to next	16
3. Growing approaches to health across Timaru South School’s two sites	19
3.1 Introducing Timaru South School	19
3.2 School-wide approaches to health and wellbeing	19
<i>Using whole-school themes to explore health concepts</i>	20
<i>Student and family wellbeing</i>	20
3.3 Connections with health promoters and cluster groups	21
3.4 Changes to school practices in the four health areas	21

<i>Healthy eating</i>	22
<i>Physical activity</i>	23
<i>Sunsmart</i>	24
<i>Smokefree</i>	25
<i>Environmental initiatives related to the four health areas</i>	25
3.5 Connecting with parents and whānau	25
3.6 Student perspectives	26
3.7 Challenges	27
3.8 Sustainability and where to next	28
4. Developing a network of student clubs at Titahi Bay School	29
4.1 Introducing Titahi Bay School	29
<i>Changing curriculum practice and focusing on democratic processes</i>	29
<i>Leadership: Developing a critical mass of committed staff</i>	30
<i>Student clubs and leaders</i>	30
4.2 Changes to the FiS health priority areas	32
<i>Healthy eating</i>	33
<i>Physical activity</i>	33
<i>Sunsmart</i>	34
<i>Smokefree</i>	35
4.3 Student perspectives	35
4.4 Connecting with parents and whānau	36
4.5 Sustainability and where to next	37
5. Developing healthy heroes at Waitara Central School	39
5.1 Introducing Waitara Central School	39
5.2 Becoming a Health Promoting School	39
<i>Developing a range of leaders</i>	40
<i>Using whole-school curriculum themes to explore the “big picture”</i>	40
5.3 Changes to school health priority areas	40
<i>Emotional safety: Developing students as “heroes”</i>	41
<i>Healthy eating</i>	42
<i>Physical activity</i>	43
<i>Sunsmart</i>	44
<i>Smokefree</i>	45
<i>Environmental activities related to the four FiS health areas</i>	45
5.4 Student perspectives	45
5.5 Connecting with family and the wider community	47
5.6 Sustainability and where to next	48
6. Supporting students to “choose to be healthy” at Park Estate School	49
6.1 Introducing Park Estate School	49
6.2 School-wide approaches to health and wellbeing	49

<i>Leadership and modelling of healthy behaviours</i>	50
<i>A focus on student outcomes and leadership</i>	50
<i>Locating FiS health areas within an integrated curriculum</i>	51
6.3 Changes to health-related initiatives at PES	51
<i>Healthy eating</i>	51
<i>Physical activity</i>	53
<i>Sunsmart</i>	53
<i>Smokefree</i>	53
<i>Emotional and social wellbeing</i>	54
<i>Environmental projects connected to FiS</i>	54
6.4 Building connections with the local community	54
6.5 Student perspectives	55
6.6 Connecting with parents and whānau	56
6.7 Challenges	57
6.8 Sustainability and where to next	57
7. School and community commitment to wellbeing at Whakamaru School	59
7.1 Introducing Whakamaru School	59
7.2 School-wide approaches to health and wellbeing	59
<i>Leadership: Developing a critical mass of committed staff</i>	59
<i>School approaches to health and wellbeing</i>	60
<i>Locating FiS within the curriculum</i>	60
<i>Student leadership</i>	61
7.3 Connections with health promoters and FiS clusters	61
7.4 Changes to health priority areas at Whakamaru School	62
<i>Healthy eating</i>	62
<i>Physical activity</i>	63
<i>Sunsmart</i>	64
<i>Smokefree</i>	64
<i>Environmental projects connected to FiS</i>	64
<i>Emotional and social wellbeing</i>	65
7.5 Student perspectives	65
7.6 Connecting with parents and whānau	67
7.7 Challenges	67
7.8 Sustainability and where to next	68
8. Building healthy foundations for learning at Te Mahoe School	69
8.1 Introducing Te Mahoe School	69
8.2 Building on an existing healthy eating focus	69
<i>Sharing leadership amongst all staff</i>	69
<i>Developing student leaders</i>	70
8.3 Making links between the curriculum and school-wide health focuses	70

8.4	Changes to school approaches to health	71
	<i>Healthy eating</i>	71
	<i>Physical activity</i>	72
	<i>Sunsmart</i>	73
	<i>Smokefree</i>	74
	<i>Emotional and social wellbeing</i>	74
8.5	Building connections with health promoters and local businesses	75
8.6	Student perspectives	75
8.7	Connecting with family and the wider community	77
8.8	Sustainability and where to next	77
	References	79
	List of abbreviations	81

Table

Table 1.1	Characteristics of the 2008 case study schools	2
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Figures

Figure 3.1	Winning sunsmart logo	24
Figure 4.1	Enviro-club consultation map	31

Appendix

Appendix A:	Interview schedules	83
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Executive summary

What does this report include?

This case study report is one component of the final report from the Healthy Futures study. Healthy Futures is the evaluation of the Ministry of Health's Fruit in Schools (FiS) initiative. This evaluation was conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and Health Outcomes International. This case study report summarises the findings from the 2008 case studies, and presents the stories from six FiS schools.

What is Fruit in Schools?

Fruit in Schools (FiS) is part of the Ministry of Health's strategy to improve health outcomes. FiS has two main objectives and associated support:

1. To promote healthy eating through offering students in low-decile schools a piece of fruit for each school day.
2. To encourage schools to further promote healthy lifestyles. Schools are offered extra support to use the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) approach to develop local solutions to health concerns in ways that involve and empower students, parents, whānau and school staff. Schools also receive extra funding for a FiS lead teacher, and assistance from health agencies, to encourage the promotion of four health priority areas:
 - healthy eating
 - physical activity
 - sunsmart
 - smokefree

Schools joined FiS in different phases. The first phase began in late 2005 in six regions, the second in early 2006, and the third in late 2006. Further phases started in 2008 and 2009. The first three phases targeted mostly decile 1 schools. The initiative now involves nearly all decile 1 and 2 schools with primary-age students (Years 0–8). In total, approximately 470 schools, and over 95,000 students, are now part of FiS.

Schools are part of regional clusters and are supported by FiS co-ordinators (FiSC) and a range of partner agencies such as Sport and Recreation New Zealand and regional sports trusts, the National Heart Foundation, the Cancer Society, and School Support Services. These partners also meet at regional interagency groups.

What were the things that were working well about FiS at the case study schools?

- FiS (and in particular, the free fruit) and HPS were catalysts which supported schools to develop a vision of themselves as a "Healthy School" and increase the priority placed on health and wellbeing.
- The free fruit was having a positive impact on students' health and wellbeing, and attitudes towards healthy eating.
- FiS/HPS was supporting schools to make many different changes to approaches to health and wellbeing at different levels of the school system.
- FiS/HPS was mainly supporting schools to strengthen approaches to three of the FiS health priority areas: healthy eating; physical activity; and sunsmart.
- The changes schools were making were having a positive impact on students' health-related knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours.
- FiS/HPS was encouraging schools to use student leadership approaches to promote physical health. The use of these approaches was also having a positive impact on students' engagement at school, social and emotional wellbeing, and was supporting students to develop a range of skills and competencies.
- Support from FiSC and agency partners was assisting schools to make plans and take action.

Were there differences from earlier case studies? In 2008, the schools:

- were making more use of HPS processes and planning tools to develop priorities and sustainable processes. These “Healthy School” processes were becoming “the way things are done” at schools
- were more focused on developing long-term plans and curriculum units to support school-wide health focuses
- had a wider range of staff and student-led health teams
- were more focused on developing student leaders, and had more awareness of the benefits of this
- had a stronger focus on involving and consulting with parents and whānau to suggest priorities
- were using new initiatives (e.g., National Administration Guideline 5, and the HEHA nutrition fund) to strengthen their approaches.

What were the main enablers of change at the 2008 case study schools?

- FiS fruit (this created a positive climate, provided healthy options, and acted as a catalyst for change).
- School leaders, staff and students who championed FiS.
- School staff who had release time for planning and to support student leaders.
- Use of the whole-school HPS approach for planning and to suggest priorities.
- FiSC and agency partner support, resources, and programmes.
- FiS school cluster sessions (and, in particular, the student leadership workshops).

What were the main challenges experienced by schools?

- Staff changes at schools.
- Developing new ways of making connections with parents and whānau.
- Less understanding of, and available support for, the smokefree area.
- The use of a professional development model that focused on lead teachers rather than all staff.
- Variable access to agency partners for some school staff.

What were the areas which could be further developed at the 2008 case study schools?

- New ways of making connections with some parents and whānau.
- Making connections with some agency partners.
- Addressing the smokefree component of FiS.

How was FiS evaluated?

The Healthy Futures evaluation of FiS ran over 2005–2009. This multi-method longitudinal study incorporated aspects of formative (supporting improvements to an initiative), process (describing and assessing activities that happen as part of an initiative), and impact (measuring the short-term outcomes of an initiative) evaluation. The evaluation explored three key questions:

1. What are the factors that support and hinder the implementation of FiS, and are likely to impact on its longer term sustainability?
2. What changes are occurring within schools and to professional practice in regard to school approaches to health and wellbeing?
3. What changes are occurring in students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in regard to the four health areas?

The Healthy Futures evaluation used three main methods of data gathering:

1. baseline and yearly follow-up surveys of school staff and students at FiS and comparison schools
2. case studies of FiS schools showing good practice in aspects of FiS/HPS (end of 2006 and 2008)
3. yearly interviews or online surveys with national and regional agency stakeholders.

This report is one of a series of three reports that together comprise the 2009 final Healthy Futures report. Earlier reports detail the interim findings from the evaluation. These include King, Boyd, and Campbell (2006), Boyd, Dingle, Campbell, King, and Corter (2007), and Boyd, King, and Dingle (2008).

1. Introduction to the 2008 case studies

1.1 Introduction to the Healthy Futures evaluation

This report is one of a series that highlights the main findings from the Healthy Futures evaluation of Fruit in Schools (FiS). FiS is part of the Ministry of Health's (MoH) strategy to improve health outcomes. This evaluation is being conducted by NZCER and HOI over 2005–9.

This report presents the findings from the 2008 case study component of Healthy Futures. One aim of this aspect of Healthy Futures is to explore the variety of ways FiS, and the use of the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) framework and processes, might be influencing practice at schools. A case study design is an effective way to share good practice, and is commonly used to explore change or innovations in school settings. Case studies allow us to explore the complexities of the context within which individual school practice occurs (Yin, 2003).

1.2 Selecting the schools

We used purposeful sampling approaches (Patton, 2002) to select the six 2008 case study schools. We used two methods. Some schools were nominated by FiS co-ordinators (FiSCs) for their good practice relating to FiS/HPS. Others were selected using the Healthy Futures student data. These data showed positive shifts in student behaviours, in at least two health priority areas, between the baseline at the start of 2006 and the 2007 follow-up survey. From these two sets of information we developed a list of possible schools. We then selected six schools to broadly reflect a range of different FiS regions and school types (as shown in Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 **Characteristics of the 2008 case study schools***

School name	School type and FiS phase	Roll size	Decile	Student ethnicity	Location
Timaru South School	Full Primary Phase 3 FiS	333	Decile 3	85% NZ European 12% Māori 3% Pasifika	Urban South Canterbury
Titahi Bay School	Contributing Phase 1 FiS	293	Decile 3	44% Māori 36% NZ European 15% Pasifika 3% Asian 2% Other	Urban Porirua City
Waitara Central School	Contributing Phase 2 FiS	130	Decile 2	62% Māori 38% NZ European	Small urban Taranaki
Park Estate School	Contributing Phase 3 FiS	157	Decile 1	57% Māori 20% Pasifika 12% NZ European 9% Asian 2% Other	Urban Counties Manukau
Whakamaru School	Full Primary Phase 3 FiS	83	Decile 3	58% Māori 32% NZ European 5% Asian 2% Pasifika 3% Other	Rural Central Lakes
Te Mahoe School	Full Primary Phase 3 FiS	45	Decile 1	98% Māori 2% European	Rural Bay of Plenty

* Much of this information is from the Ministry of Education 2008 roll return data.

We visited each school at the end of 2008 or start of 2009. We interviewed the principal, the FiS lead teacher and the FiSC who worked with the school. At most schools, we also conducted a focus group interview with: classroom teachers; students who were active in leading health and wellbeing activities; and parents and whānau who were involved in school health and wellbeing activities. The interview questions were focused around recent changes to school approaches to health and wellbeing. A copy of each interview schedule is contained in Appendix A. We also collected any relevant school documents such as action plans for the FiS priority areas. Interview notes and other data were analysed qualitatively within and between schools for themes.

1.3 Ethics and confidentiality

All school staff, students, parents and whānau and FiSC who participated in interviews or focus groups were given an information sheet about the study and asked to complete a consent form. Parents and whānau of the students who participated in focus groups were also provided with an

information sheet and asked for consent for their child to participate. Examples of similar information letters and consent forms are contained in an earlier Healthy Futures report (Boyd et al., 2007). All school staff, parents and whānau and FiSC were sent a copy of interview or focus group questions before the interview. Each school principal was asked for permission for their school to be named, so that the sharing of practice between schools would be possible. To ensure that the information collected fairly represented the experiences of stakeholders, each school and FiSC was sent a draft of the case for review.

1.4 Report structure

This report is in two sections. The first section gives an overview of the findings from the six 2008 case study schools. The themes that emerge are compared with those from an earlier set of six case studies completed in 2006, and reported on in Boyd et al. (2007).¹ The second section of this report includes the six 2008 school case studies. Each case study provides details about one school's health and wellbeing priorities and related activities, and describes recent changes at the school, who was involved in the process, the impacts of these changes and their sustainability. The case studies also show how FiS-related activities intersect with other school initiatives and practices, as well as wider changes that are happening in the health and education sector. The case studies variously highlight how:

- Timaru South School is working with health and education agencies and their cluster to enhance their approaches to the four FiS health areas and develop student leaders
- Titahi Bay School is setting up a range of clubs for students to promote health and wellbeing
- Waitara Central School is using HPS processes to develop a "Healthy Heroes" culture
- Park Estate School is developing ways of supporting students to "choose to be healthy"
- Whakamaru School is using HPS processes to develop new priorities and plans
- Te Mahoe School is using FiS to strengthen a focus on healthy eating and student leadership.

¹ These case studies are also at: <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/fruitinschools-casestudies>

2. Themes from the 2008 case studies

2.1 Involving more people in leading change

One of the aims of FiS is to support school communities to strengthen their view of themselves as a health-promoting or “Healthy School”. To do this, those in the school community need to make changes to their beliefs and practices. The complexities of managing change in a school setting are well documented (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996; Stoll, 2000), and much of the literature discusses the importance of leadership in developing, nurturing and sustaining change (Fullan, 2005; Harris, 2002).

Strong leadership was pivotal in supporting change at the case study schools. Principals tended to be key initial champions of FiS and HPS. Commonly, the principal also delegated leadership responsibilities to other staff, primarily FiS lead teachers. At the 2006 case study schools, most FiS-related activities tended to be led by the principal and a lead teacher. The 2008 case study schools showed a similar pattern, but some had experienced the loss of momentum that can occur as key staff leave. Therefore some of the 2008 schools were developing team-based approaches to share leadership between a larger number of staff and students. These approaches were viewed as a form of succession planning for both staff and students which was likely to support longer term sustainability.

At most schools, the principal continued to be actively involved in planning activities and was purposeful about ensuring change occurred. School leaders also gained the support of the Board of Trustees, who showed their interest in health-related activities by allocating funds.

2.2 Becoming a “Healthy School”

Staff at the case study schools were motivated to join FiS because they considered the initiative to be well aligned with their existing “big picture”. This could be in terms of the messages, priorities or processes promoted by FiS and HPS. At some schools, FiS messages and priority areas aligned well with the school’s existing interests. In both 2006 and 2008, many staff noted that, after literacy and numeracy, health and wellbeing, and the Health and Physical Education (PE) curriculum was a high priority at their school. Accordingly, prior to FiS, many schools had an existing emphasis on some of the FiS health priority areas, and in particular, physical activity. Although many schools had this foundation, FiS still acted as a catalyst to support staff to further build approaches and see new priorities. This raised awareness across the school community about the different ways they could promote health and wellbeing and also raised the status of the Health and PE curriculum.

At some schools, school leaders were interested in HPS as the use of whole-school approaches struck a chord with them. For these and other schools, a key benefit of FiS was the way it was assisting school communities to view health and wellbeing in a different and more holistic way. Many staff, students and whānau at the case study schools talked about their school as a “Healthy School”, and described how the promotion of health and wellbeing was becoming part of the school ethos or way of doing things. The case studies show how schools were developing an increasing range of activities that were embedding the promotion of health and wellbeing within the school culture. For these schools, a “Healthy School” focus was resulting in staff looking beyond the four FiS health areas (which are focused on physical health) to make synergies with approaches to emotional, social or environmental wellbeing. A number of the facets of being a “Healthy School” are expanded on below.

Using HPS processes and creating health teams

For all of the case study schools, being a “Healthy School” involved the use of HPS processes such as setting up a health team, engaging in awareness-raising activities to develop a shared vision, conducting needs assessments which included input from students, parents and whānau, developing action plans and setting up more opportunities for student leadership. Compared to 2006, the use of HPS processes was more embedded in the 2008 case study schools.

Rather than the suggested format for a HPS health team (that is, one team of staff, students, parents and whānau and other local health promoters or community members), most schools had a range of health-related teams. The most common approach was to have a staff team and a separate student health team supported by a staff member, and often a FiSC. Another common approach was to develop staff and parent teams for specific purposes, such as revising nutrition policies.

Empowering student leaders

A key change in school practice, which FiS was supporting, was a growth in student leadership. Compared to 2006, the 2008 case study schools showed increased involvement of students in setting directions at their school. The way leadership opportunities were organised, and the range of opportunities, varied between schools. But all schools had some form of student health team, supported by school staff. This team often included students from different classes and year levels. Most schools also had student physical activity leaders (PALs), and some form of environmental group which had strong links to some FiS health areas.

Putting students in the driving seat, and encouraging them to promote healthy actions and messages in ways that aligned with the interests and values of their peers, was resulting in school staff becoming more aware of the value of empowering the student community. They could see a range of benefits stemming from these opportunities, including how engaged students were in promoting healthy choices and how, through leading activities, students were developing self-confidence and a wide range of competencies. Schools also saw these leadership opportunities to

be improving students' social and emotional health and wellbeing. As a result they were starting to consider how to develop the leadership skills of younger students by including them on teams.

Most school staff considered the FiS student leadership workshops to be a pivotal enabler. Across schools, a universal refrain from all stakeholders was that “students came back buzzing” from these sessions as they shared their successes with their peers and learnt new ideas. Other enablers were the support provided to student leaders by FiSC and Active Schools and EnviroSchools facilitators. This prioritisation of student-led approaches is part of a wider shift towards student-centred practices in schools which is also promoted by other education and health initiatives.

Being an “add on” that tended to operate outside the classroom programme could be a disabler of the health teams. The case studies suggest that teachers who did not have release time to support the teams could find it hard to keep up the momentum. To ensure longer term sustainability, ongoing release time for teachers may be necessary. As noted in previous reports, another solution could be to explore models which locate the work of health teams within the curriculum, thus aligning HPS more closely with the intent of the Health and PE curriculum.

2.3 Addressing the three arms of the HPS framework

Joining FiS was supporting school staff to take a more focused approach to identifying and addressing health priorities. With the support of FiSC and health teams, most schools had developed action plans to address some of the FiS health areas. These plans tended to include actions relating to all three aspects of the HPS framework: (1) School organisation and ethos; (2) Curriculum, teaching and learning; and (3) Community links and partnerships. This focused approach to planning was strengthening the alignment between different aspects of the school system by ensuring all promoted similar messages. Common activities are described below.

(1) School organisation and ethos

All the case study schools had an emphasis on developing a healthy ethos as part of the school culture. This was achieved through embedding FiS-related goals in long-term or strategic plans or by organising a school-wide focus or whole-school professional development (PD) around one or more of the FiS priority areas. Another common approach was to make changes to school policies, practices and plans to ensure school-wide practices reflected the “Healthy School” vision. School leaders also encouraged staff to “walk the talk” and model healthy behaviours, and created space for students or staff to promote healthy choices during school-wide events such as assemblies and meet the teacher sessions. Many schools set up “caught being good” awards which acknowledged good choices in a range of areas. Schools also made a number of changes to structures such as the school timetable, environment or equipment to better support healthy lifestyles.

(2) Curriculum, teaching and learning

At part of their action plans, most of the 2008 case study schools were exploring how healthy messages and approaches could be promoted through classroom curriculum activities. This represented a shift in practice from the 2006 case study schools at which change tended to be primarily located at a school-wide level. To coincide with the arrival of the FiS fruit, most of the 2008 schools had developed integrated curriculum themes or units about healthy eating or lifestyles. Teachers then tended to select new topics to build on this learning. This approach was supporting the FiS health areas to become more embedded in the curriculum.

We noted in earlier reports (Boyd et al., 2007; Boyd et al., 2008), that the Health and PE curriculum, and the inquiry learning approaches that are commonly used in schools, offer staff the scope to use student-led and health-promotion processes within the curriculum. In previous years, schools had yet to take full advantage of this. This was still the case in 2008, but there was some evidence that student-led actions were increasingly becoming part of curriculum practice. For example, one class had become a health team. These students developed three health projects to work on. Another example was the gardening and environmental projects which many schools were developing which were linked to curriculum themes and healthy eating focuses.

(3) Community links and partnerships

FiS is located within a wider system of health-related services, initiatives and activities. One premise of FiS is that it will facilitate increased access to agency partners, community groups and parents and whānau, and that these people will work with schools to address priorities. In the case study schools, these linkage and partnerships were created in three key ways.

Making connections with agency partners

At nearly all of the case study schools, school leaders or lead teachers had a close relationship with a local FiSC. School staff perceived this relationship to be very valuable because of the range of services the FiSC provided. These included:

- assistance with developing HPS awareness and processes including support for school events
- providing action plan models for the health areas and individualised assistance with planning
- access to networks and ideas through FiS school cluster sessions
- support for student leaders through workshops, and assistance with student health teams
- “brokering” of introductions to agency partners and other local community agencies
- assistance with HEHA nutrition fund applications, and to source other funds
- general support around the four health areas through information, ideas and resources.

Apart from FiSC, schools’ connections with, and access to, the main FiS agency partners varied between schools and regions. Through FiS, nearly all schools had strengthened their relationships with some agency partners, the most common being RST representatives, and public health nurses (PHNs). Some staff wanted to make new connections to support their activities, but agency partners were not always available in their region. Schools were also using their own connections

to support FiS-related activities, with a number making links with council or community groups, or businesses. Most schools also had connections with other providers who supported their health-related activities. Common visitors included healthy lifestyle role models (such as Mission On lifestyle ambassadors), and Life Education and DARE educators. One unintended outcome of FiS was that, by brokering relationships between school staff and local council or community groups, FiSC were supporting schools to access health and wellbeing resources in areas beyond the four FiS priority areas. The school change and health promotion literature suggests that collaborations with the wider community are likely to support change (Boyd et al., 2005; IUHPE, 2008), and this appeared to be the case at these schools.

Clustering and connections with other schools

As well as the one-on-one individual support that FiSC provided, many staff also found the connections made with other schools at FiS cluster sessions or student leadership workshops to be a valuable source of ideas. All schools were also using their connections with local early childhood providers, or intermediate and secondary schools to engage in joint health-promoting activities. Common activities included sharing fruit with local early childhood centres, partaking in inter-school events and sports or sharing other schools' sports facilities.

Making connections with parents and whānau

All schools had a variety of ways they shared students' successes and communicated health-related messages to parents and whānau. Most common was sending home messages in school newsletters to encourage buy-in to school activities such as healthy lunch box initiatives. Another common strategy was encouraging parents and whānau to take part in events during which health messages were shared. Capitalising on parents' interest in seeing their child perform or their learning celebrated, most schools promoted health messages during these occasions. Most also invited parents and whānau to events focused around health and wellbeing such as Olympic days, beach education days and healthy soup or lunch days. During these occasions the "Healthy School" vision was promoted and the community was encouraged to model healthy behaviours relating to the four FiS areas. Schools also set up situations for staff or students to promote healthy messages at meet the teacher evenings or during parent-teacher conferences.

Most of the 2006 case study schools occasionally consulted their parent and whānau community about health and wellbeing, either by surveys or at meetings and hui. At the 2008 case study schools, we noticed an increased focus on this area. Most schools had consulted parents and whānau about school food policies, and were also making more use of HPS processes such as parent consultation and surveys to suggest new priorities. Some of the 2006 and 2008 schools had specific practices in place for consulting with Māori whānau or Pasifika families, but in general, schools noted they needed to develop more of these processes.

The range of ways parents and whānau supported health-related activities at school was also slowly growing. The FiS health priority area that traditionally receives the most parent and whānau support in schools is physical activity. This was the case at these schools, with parents

coaching or supporting school sports or kapa haka groups. In addition, most of the 2008 case study schools had a small core group of parents and whānau who took a lead role in health-related activities. Some were members of health teams or supported students at leadership workshops, others ran breakfast or lunch clubs. Some took part in working bees to plant fruit trees, improve school grounds or vegetable gardens, and others assisted in organising health-promoting events or fundraisers.

In general, the relationships schools had with their parent community varied. Some parents and whānau were strongly connected to school, some came to events if their child was involved and most schools had a group of parents and whānau with whom they had more difficulty forming connections. Most schools had tried a range of ways to connect with these parents and whānau, and were currently exploring new ways of forming partnerships.

2.4 Changes to school practice linked to the FiS areas

All school stakeholders at the 2008 case study schools described a wider range of ways their school was promoting the four health areas compared to the 2006 case study schools, indicating that practices are evolving over time and ideas are being shared within the FiS community. This was particularly the case for two priority areas: healthy eating and physical activity. All schools had also made some changes to sunsmart practices, and some had made changes to their approaches to smokefree. Common changes, and the impact of these, are described below.

Healthy eating changes and impacts

Similar to 2006, staff at the 2008 case study schools described numerous ways they were promoting healthy eating. Prior to FiS, some schools had already made some modifications, but encouraged by involvement in FiS, one change all had in common was a review of policies and approaches to the food eaten or purchased at school. In most cases, students, parents and whānau were involved in these decisions. All schools had either changed unhealthy tuck shop or lunch order food to healthy options or closed their canteens. Most also had “water only” policies and had provided increased access to drinking water. Other common recent changes to approaches included:

- promoting healthy eating and choices, and ideas about everyday and treat foods, during “brain breaks” or by developing healthy or “zero waste” lunch box initiatives
- developing strong links between a whole-school focus on healthy eating and the classroom programme by designing curriculum themes or topics that explored healthy eating
- assisting student teams to promote healthy eating via presentations, competitions or events
- holding regular healthy lunch days
- changing the food offered at class celebrations, school events or for rewards
- working towards Heart Foundation Heartbeat awards

- encouraging staff and the parent community to reinforce consistent messages and model a healthy culture by “walking the talk” during the school day and at school events and functions.

In May 2007, modifications to NAG 5 were announced in the *Education Gazette*. These required schools to promote healthy eating and sell only healthy food options. As a result of the changes described above, half of the case study schools already met these requirements, and the other half were well on the way.

In itself, the FiS fruit was seen as very valuable, as it assisted schools to provide healthy food for students who did not have enough to eat. Staff considered the fruit, and their emphasis on healthy choices, to be improving students’ nutrition and reducing problems such as school sores. Staff also reported other outcomes they associated with students’ improved nutrition, including better concentration and attendance, which was linked to improved achievement.

Physical activity changes and impacts

Prior to FiS, many schools had an existing focus on physical activity. Nevertheless, on joining FiS, one priority for most was to increase the opportunities provided to students to engage in different forms of physical activity. The 2008 case study schools had a broad range of activities on offer, a number of which had been strengthened through connections forged through FiS. Recent common changes to approaches to physical activity included:

- refocusing PE plans and setting requirements about daily or weekly fitness for all students
- changing the timetable to give students more opportunities to be active
- acquisition of more PE equipment for students, and making this available at break times
- setting up teams of students or staff to run activities during break times such as Jump Jam
- increasing the focus on holding regular community physical activity events, and ensuring these were linked with a classroom curriculum focus
- increased integration of physical activity within the general classroom programme through active maths or spelling games, or “snackactivities”
- increased promotion of after-school, weekend or inter-school sports, and events such as Bikewise Week and Weetbix Tryathlons, and increased connection between these activities and the PE programme
- promotion of active transport via newsletters and events such as Walk to School Week
- introducing students, parents and whānau to new activities such as tennis or croquet
- redesigning school playgrounds to support a wider range of physical activity
- changing fundraising activities to ensure these encouraged the community to be active.

Most schools had a group of student PALs trained by RST staff, or a group of students who managed their peers’ access to PE equipment at break times. Joining FiS had spurred three schools to take part in whole-school contracts such as SCPAP² and Active Schools. This PD was

² School–Community Physical Activity Project.

a key support for teachers, which acted to increase the emphasis they placed on physical activity, and encouraged them to see the value of student-led activities. Many schools also made use of other specialists as role models or facilitators. Overall, as a result of this broad range of initiatives, all schools considered themselves to be “very active”.

Sunsmart changes and impacts

A number of school leaders noted that joining FiS had encouraged them to “re-activate” their sunsmart guidelines. Common approaches included enforcing “no hat, no play” policies, and exploring options for increasing shade at school or during school events, or changing the timing of events. Most schools were working on tree planting programmes to provide extra shade as well as fruit. A number of schools were working with the support of FiSC or CS staff to gain sunsmart accreditation. All schools had, or were working towards, providing school sunhats and access to sunscreen for students. Teachers covered sunsmart education in the classroom or during events such as beach education days and organised related curriculum activities such as hat or logo designing competitions. In general, the 2008 case study schools displayed a wider range of sunsmart practices than the 2006 schools. Teachers considered students to be more aware of sunsmart behaviours, and attributed this to school policies as well as societal changes. However, some also noted staff were not always consistent about modelling or reinforcing these behaviours.

Smokefree changes and impacts

Since joining FiS, neither the 2006 nor 2008 schools reported making many changes in regard to the smokefree component of FiS. The sense that “we already do that” was strong, with most staff noting that their school was smokefree as required by legislation, and they promoted their school as smokefree with signage and at events. Some staff considered students were too young for smokefree education. Nevertheless, all offered some smokefree education to students. This tended to occur during topics about healthy lifestyles, and was mostly delivered by external providers such as role models and Life Education and DARE educators. At two schools, their “Healthy School” focus was resulting in an increased emphasis on addressing staff or student smoking. A further two planned to have an in-depth focus on this area in 2009. As noted previously (Boyd et al., 2008), unlike the other three priority areas, smokefree does not have an agency partner to directly support schools. It appears that schools could benefit from more assistance in this area.

Changes and impacts beyond the four FiS health areas

In general, being a “Healthy School” was raising staff’s awareness about benefits of promoting health and wellbeing, and the different ways this could be done. All schools were capitalising on the synergies between the four FiS health areas. For example, at community sports events, messages about all four FiS areas were promoted. Staff also saw connections between the physical health areas of FiS and social and emotional wellbeing. Most considered the range of student leadership opportunities they were offering to be having the added benefits of supporting students to improve their self-esteem and develop a range of skills and competencies. Most schools were

also working on a range of other ways to improve students' self-esteem. Many schools provided opportunities for student to take a lead in running healthy eating or physical activity activities, and celebrated students' successes (through activities such as "caught being good" awards). As a result of this, stakeholders noted improvements in students' physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as academic outcomes. The ultimate result was a happier school culture. This shows how health outcomes are intertwined, and the importance of considering health and wellbeing in a holistic way.

Most schools were also capitalising on the association between the health and wellbeing of individuals and the environment. The interaction between the FiS health areas and school environmental projects was strengthening both these areas. For example, the waste peel and fruit scraps from FiS fruit provided raw material for schools to develop or improve worm farms, composting systems and edible gardens. In turn, these gardens build on schools' approaches to healthy eating by providing opportunities for students to learn about, grow and eat vegetables and fruit. Compared to 2006, at the 2008 case study schools, the link between FiS and environmental initiatives had grown stronger. One reason was that FiS were supporting schools to access the HEHA nutrition fund for the development of school gardens, or to purchase cooking equipment to make vegetable soup. Schools valued these extra funds but a number of staff noted the administration related to HEHA applications and reporting was extensive.

2.5 Student, parent and whānau perspectives on change

At each case study school, we talked to a group of senior students or student leaders. At most schools we also talked to a few parents and whānau who were involved with health-related activities at the school. All the students valued their school's focus on health and wellbeing with many describing their school as "healthy" or "very active". All outlined some recent changes in relation to the way health and wellbeing was promoted at school, and all were extremely enthusiastic about the free fruit they were receiving as part of FiS, and the benefits of this for their health. They reported other students also liked the fruit and activities such as healthy cooking.

Students recognised that learning about, and promoting, the four FiS health areas supported them to develop the skills and knowledge they needed to make healthy choices and be healthy adults. Most could describe positive changes to their health-related behaviours at school; a number also noted they were using their new knowledge to make changes to home behaviours. In three of the health areas—healthy eating, physical activity and sun protection—students attributed their recent behavioural changes to three main factors. One was the activities initiated by students and staff at school. Students noted that many other factors influenced their behaviour, the other two most common being home practices and TV. In the fourth health area—smokefree—students' main source of input came from TV ad campaigns. They reported they had not learnt much about staying smokefree in class, but external providers such as healthy lifestyle role models and Life Education or DARE educators did provide some input, as did some teachers and parents. Although school and home were the two main sources of health-related information, students

noted that teachers, parents and whānau were not always consistent with the messages and behaviours they modelled.

At both the 2006 and 2008 case study schools, the activities in which students were most engaged, and which they were most likely to link to changes to their attitudes, knowledge or behaviours, were those which they or other students led, or which enabled them to “take action”. Being a member of a health or enviro-team, a PAL or another type of leader was very engaging and empowering for these students and they were acutely conscious of their position as role models. As a result, they were trying to model healthy behaviours and make related changes at school and at home. As well as increasing their knowledge about healthy lifestyle choices, students were gaining valuable life skills and competencies from their actions. These included critical thinking, teamwork, planning, relating to others or leadership skills. These align well with the key competencies outlined in the new school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b). Increasing the opportunities for students to take action and develop these competencies may place these young people in a better position to effect longer term change in their communities, as the actions students were engaging in match well with the health promotion priorities in the Ottawa Charter (World Health Organization, 1986), such as creating supportive environments, strengthening community actions and developing personal skills.

At a number of schools, students talked about how they were getting sick of being bombarded with “don’t do it” messages. TV ad campaigns about health and school sunsmart rules were cited as the two main examples of this. Students preferred their health messages to come from their peers or be delivered in a fun and interactive way.

Like their children, the parents and whānau with whom we talked were very positive about the FiS fruit. They valued the fruit as it supplemented low-income families’ food budgets, exposed their children to new food choices and improved their children’s attitudes towards healthy eating. They also valued their school’s focus on health and wellbeing and the way schools were consulting parents and whānau. Many had noticed changes in their children’s attitudes and behaviour that they connected to school activities and could also describe the impact this was having on home practices. These changes tended to be in regard to healthy eating and physical activity. Overall, parents and whānau considered most other parents supported the schools’ focus on health and wellbeing, but a few “did not like being told what to do”. School staff also noted that their parent consultations showed very positive views of school health priorities and gave them information that assisted them to develop new priorities.

2.6 The wider health and education environment

Since FiS started, staff, parents and whānau and students had all noticed a shift in the emphasis society is placing on health and wellbeing. A number commented on the media attention given to the “obesity epidemic” and the corresponding increase in ad campaigns and TV programmes about healthy lifestyles. Some were noticing that students were arriving at school with a better

understanding of healthy behaviours, which had been developed during their time in early childhood education.

Another change in the wider system was the introduction of a range of new initiatives such as Mission On and the HEHA Nutrition Fund. This proliferation was resulting in school staff being unclear about the boundaries between different initiatives, or whether support was available to them. FiSC often played a pivotal role in showing staff how they could take advantage of the resources these initiatives offered to enhance their existing activities. Although these other initiatives and the societal shift mentioned above were also influencing change in schools and their communities, in terms of approaches to healthy eating, FiS was seen as a key enabler.

Another change in the school system was the 2007 revision of the entire New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b), which schools are expected to implement by 2010. The curriculum places increased emphasis on the use of whole-school approaches and schools developing locally relevant curriculum by forming partnerships with students, parents and whānau. School staff considered FiS to be well aligned with the new curriculum. One reason was because HPS processes encourage parent consultation and student-led approaches. Some also saw a strong connection between the “big picture” thematic approaches that are promoted in the curriculum and their school’s health and wellbeing themes, or how student-led activities could support students to develop the key competencies.

2.7 Sustainability

Having a number of health-related teams and a planning process in place was resulting in health promotion processes and activities becoming embedded within the culture of each school. School leaders considered their school to now have the policies and processes in place to enable them to continue their journey. Changes in school staff was a key challenge to longer term sustainability. The case studies show some of the creative solutions schools had evolved to address this.

School staff noted that they had made a number of changes to school practices, and they were now consolidating these. Most of the main changes were in two of the FiS health areas: healthy eating and physical activity. Most considered there were still many further actions that could be taken in these areas, and they were in the process of developing new priorities. This is indicative of the time frames that are necessary to fully explore one or two health priority areas, and suggests that for longer term change in a range of areas, extended times frames are necessary.

To keep up the momentum, the majority of staff considered continued funding (particularly for fruit and lead teachers), and agency support, to be very important. They did not want FiS to follow the trajectory of many other initiatives in low-decile schools; that is, funding stops after a few years, and schools find it hard to sustain the momentum. The free fruit was considered by school leaders to be the main aspect of FiS that was not sustainable. Given the positive impact of the fruit on students’ health and wellbeing, there was nearly universal support for its continued provision from all school stakeholders. Most school leaders did not have detailed plans about how

this could be achieved in the absence of funding. Some queried whether this was a realistic aim given the economic climate and the challenges of finding extra funding in low-decile schools, and had therefore put this in the “too hard basket”. Most hoped the Government would continue its funding in some form and that, over time, they could encourage parents and whānau to take ownership. A number of schools had also started developing orchards and gardens, or had tentative plans to approach local suppliers or businesses for sponsorship.

2.8 Summary and where to next

The experiences of the case study schools show how the gift of free fruit from the MoH had modelled a practical action-orientated approach towards addressing health concerns, which schools had extended. The information we collected from school stakeholders suggests that joining FiS raised awareness in the school community about the importance of student health and wellbeing and how to be a “Healthy School”. FiS was assisting school communities to promote healthy choices by providing additional support, as well as the flexibility for staff to grow and strengthen health-related initiatives to suit their context and community. In general, all school stakeholders considered the changes their school was making to be having a positive impact on students’ health-related attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours.

A comparison of the experiences of the 2006 and 2008 case study schools suggests that some aspects of FiS are evolving and strengthening over time. The first main Healthy Futures report (Boyd et al., 2007) showed that most of schools’ health promotion efforts tended to be at the school-wide level, and therefore had their best fit with the “School organisation and ethos” part of the HPS framework. An example is changing policies and guidelines around the food eaten at school. Compared to their 2006 counterparts, the 2008 case study schools were making more use of HPS processes, such as community consultation, to plan priorities and activities. They also had more focus on designing curriculum activities that aligned with school-wide health focuses. This suggests that the way FiS supports schools to have a vision of themselves as a “Healthy School” was impacting on planning and actions across all aspects of the school system. The synergy between the FiS health areas and school environmental initiatives had also strengthened over time.

Catalysed by the FiS student leadership workshops and PAL training, there had been a growth in opportunities for student leadership, with most schools having a number of different groups of students who were active in promoting health and wellbeing. Interviews with students suggest these leadership opportunities were associated with a wide range of outcomes, one of which was improved ability to make healthy choices. These experiences were also having the added benefits of supporting students to develop a range of skills and competencies, engaging students in learning and improving students’ social and emotional health and wellbeing. In this synergistic way, school activities connected to FiS can impact on a broader range of health and education outcomes beyond the physical health areas prioritised by FiS. This synergy was recognised by many school stakeholders.

Changes in the wider health and education environment were also acting to strengthen school approaches to health. Because of the groundwork they had in place, these schools were well-positioned to use new resources and initiatives to their advantage. For example, these schools saw the revisions to NAG 5 as an opportunity to further strengthen their approaches to healthy eating, and the HEHA nutrition fund was also used to progress schools' plans.

For most schools, their relationship with a FiSC was pivotal in assisting them to develop action plans, and progress these. FiSC were also assisting schools to access support from FiS partner or other agencies. Since joining FiS, the case study schools had made many different modifications to their approaches to health and wellbeing. As staff could clearly see the benefits for students' health, wellbeing and learning, which stemmed from these changes, these schools were motivated to continue their journey, strengthen these approaches and develop new priorities. The availability of agency support in areas that schools have yet to address, and longer term funding for school staff and resourcing, are likely to impact on schools' ability to continue this journey.

3. Growing approaches to health across Timaru South School's two sites

3.1 Introducing Timaru South School

Timaru South School (TSS) is a decile 3 full primary school. Following a network review in 2006, the school is in the unique position of having two sites. The main site is Timaru and the other at Pareora, a small local town. The two sites have a campus day each term, Pareora students attend technology and specialist classes at Timaru and students participate in joint sports teams.

The two school sites serve communities of different natures. The Timaru parent community ranges from middle-income families to those who are struggling financially. Pareora is a tightly networked community which centres around the school and a local freezing works, and has a larger proportion of families who find it difficult to make ends meet. In total, the two sites have a roll of approximately 330 students. About 85 percent are New Zealand European, 12 percent are Māori and the school also has a small number of students from other backgrounds.

The school started Phase 3 of FiS in October 2006. The overall approach to health and wellbeing is led by the principal who is strongly committed to improving school practices. Each school site also has a FiS lead teacher who is in a management position, a student health team as well as student PALs. School leaders at the two sites work with a variety of groups as they enhance school approaches to health and wellbeing. These groups include staff, parents and students, as well as local health promoters and agencies.

During our visit to the school we talked to the principal and a parent who is on a nutrition management committee. At each site we also talked to the FiS lead teacher, some classroom teachers and representatives from the student health team. We also interviewed the FiSC who works with the school. In this region, HPS support, and FiS, is provided through a partnership between the local District Health Board (DHB) and Community and Public Health through the Wellbeing and Vitality in Education (WAVE) initiative.

3.2 School-wide approaches to health and wellbeing

Staff at TSS noted that, after literacy and numeracy, health is their next priority. This focus was strengthened as a result of a 2006 community survey which showed that parents prioritise these three curriculum areas. In regard to health, staff were surprised to find that, rather than areas schools often cover such as water and road safety, parents were more concerned about students'

self-esteem and confidence, relationship skills, nutritional practices and knowledge about ways to keep safe and avoid drugs and alcohol. These results help drive current school directions.

The school's participation in FiS has also led to a number of health areas being prioritised in school-wide PD or strategic plans. Each year, schools in the local FiS cluster jointly explore the same health priority areas. In 2007 the cluster focus was physical activity and working towards sunsmart accreditation. As a result, alongside literacy, PE and physical activity was a main school PD focus for 2007–8. The main cluster and TSS focus for 2008 was nutrition, and the planned focus for 2009 is smokefree.

TSS has a holistic approach to exploring each health area as staff, students and parents work (with external support) on enhancing school policies and practices. A related curriculum unit is designed, and staff “walk the talk” by role modelling healthy behaviours.

Using whole-school themes to explore health concepts

At TSS the curriculum is structured around whole-school integrated themes which change each term. Each term has a “host” curriculum area, with the Health and PE curriculum usually being a host once a year. In 2007, to support the school focus on sunsmart, staff developed a theme that included a sunsmart focus. In Term 3 of 2008, health was the host curriculum and the theme was “Healthy living” (with a focus on healthy eating and activity).

In 2009 the school plans to trial the use of year-long school-wide themes. The selected theme is “Journeys”. In Term 1 health is the host curriculum, and staff plan to explore personal journeys and emotional wellbeing. To ensure this builds on prior themes, this topic will include an emphasis on how healthy eating and physical activity contribute to wellbeing.

Student and family wellbeing

Following from community consultation, in recent years TSS has increased its emphasis on building students' self-esteem and life skills. Students take part in Kiwi Can,³ a self-esteem and life skills programme run by facilitators. Lessons are structured around themes the school selects such as relationships, resilience, healthy eating and action and the environment. Staff noted these fit well with some of the FiS priority areas. Other emphases are celebrating student successes through use of ICT and the local media, and developing students' self-management skills.

Supporting the parent community to access resources that are likely to improve students' wellbeing is another focus. There are a number of agencies involved with TSS and it is part of a local Strengthening Families initiative. The school has access to a team of Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), a PHN who runs a lunchtime clinic, and a social worker who supports students. Students are able to self-refer or be referred by parents or staff. At the Pareora site, staff also support parents to access local health agencies.

³ <http://www.kiwican.org.nz>

Student leadership

The school aims to build students' self-esteem and life skills by offering a range of opportunities for older students to demonstrate leadership skills, and younger students to develop these skills. Years 7 and 8 students are promoted as school role models. Each site has an elected student council which includes students from all year levels. In 2007, following a FiS/WAVE student leadership day, the two sites each started student health teams. These teams are a subgroup of the student council, and are active in driving health initiatives at each site. Each week, supported by the principal and other teachers, members of the student council film school activities and make a "Week that was" DVD to showcase events. The health team also use the DVD to promote health messages. This DVD is played at assemblies at both sites. Different classes each take a turn to run these assemblies. Both sites also have a large group of PALs.

Overall, teachers were impressed by the quality of students' ideas, their commitment and the success of their initiatives. Staff considered the health teams give some students a much needed creative outlet, and they enjoy seeing students' passions harnessed in such a positive way. Staff are committed to the health teams, but reported they ran in "fits and starts" as finding the time to support the teams was sometimes difficult. Therefore, the teams tend to be managed by school leaders who have release time, and assisted by the FiSC. Despite the extra workload, teachers commented the teams were changing staff beliefs about the value of student-led practice as they saw how students often had better ideas than teachers about what would interest their peers.

3.3 Connections with health promoters and cluster groups

Staff at TSS have a longstanding relationship with the local FiSC. This started prior to FiS. Staff are highly appreciative of the "outstanding" support she offers, especially the way she acts as a "one-stop-shop" to co-ordinate an "overwhelming" number of health initiatives and agencies, as well as resources. (This region has a WAVE resource centre located at a school which loans CDs, books, curriculum resources for the FiS areas and equipment and games.) School leaders also value the "hands-on" assistance provided by the FiSC for planning and policy development, and considered that without the FiSC's gentle pressure they would not have come as far as they had. Although it was sometimes hard to find time to attend cluster meetings, staff found the PD, networking and connections to be invaluable. For those at the Pareroa site, an added benefit stemming from a cluster session was an introduction to the contact for a local Safer Community Council scheme. The school was now working with the council to consult the community to support the planning of revitalisation projects such as play areas and bus services to Timaru.

3.4 Changes to school practices in the four health areas

School activities and recent changes relating to each of the four FiS health areas are described below, along with related environmental initiatives and connections made with health promoters.

Healthy eating

On joining FiS in 2006, one priority for the school was improving school practices and policies around healthy eating. Over 2006–8 the school had gradually made a range of changes. Staff reflected they had come a long way from the time students' lunches were filled with packaged and processed food, and students and staff regularly ordered takeaways. As one teacher noted, "When I came here, fish and chips were available every day!" In 2006, the school changed their lunch orders to healthy foods, and asked local shops not to sell fizzy drinks to students. The school now has a "water only" policy, and new water fountains. The free fruit offered as part of FiS is an important part of the school's healthy eating focus. Staff, students and parents appreciate the way this gives students access to a wider range of fruit, improves nutrition and enables the school to provide healthy options to students who do not have enough to eat.

Staff noted that the NAG change and recent media focus on health had given them an impetus to further refine school policies. In 2007 the principal asked for parent volunteers for a nutrition management committee, and formed a team of staff and four parents. In 2008, with the support of a dietician from the DHB and the FiSC, the team designed a survey to consult the parent community about school food practices. The survey got a higher than usual response, and these results, along with consultation with the student health teams and the resources in the *Food and Nutrition for Healthy, Confident Kids Toolkit* (Ministry of Education, 2007a), were used to develop a draft nutrition policy. This policy includes a rationale, a list of banned foods such as fizzy drinks and sweets and examples of everyday and limited frequency foods. A draft was given to the community for feedback and the school was starting to implement the policy. To support this policy, regular messages about healthy eating are placed in school newsletters.

Over time, a consensus developed about the need for staff to "walk the talk". Teachers are starting to offer options such as carrot sticks at morning tea shouts and food rewards are discouraged in classrooms. Staff also informally reinforce nutritional messages by praising students who eat healthy food or who have zero waste (see below) lunch boxes. In the junior school, individual staff also organise "brain food" days during which parents bring healthy options.

In terms of curriculum activities, a unit on healthy living was timed to support the 2008 nutrition focus. Students engaged in activities such as a class survey to see what was in their lunch boxes. They then categorised this information as "brain" or "treat" food. Students also planned the menu for a school camp, and the school had a pumpkin soup day. At the end of the unit, students completed a school-wide assessment which required them to design and make a healthy lunch (this assessment connected aspects of health, technology and English). Some students used tools such as PowerPoint or videos to showcase their work. This assessment was included in students' "road books" or portfolios. Teachers were impressed by the knowledge students displayed.

The student health team had a number of ideas about how to support the school healthy living focus. They ran a healthy lunch day to raise funds for their projects. Students surveyed their peers asking about the food they liked. During the lunch day, with the support of parents and staff, they used this information to offer \$2 rolls with a choice of healthy fillings. Students also hold regular

competitions and give prizes such as beans to grow in the garden. The team also uses the “Week that was” DVD to present health messages at assemblies, and has a suggestion box for ideas. Recently the health team noticed that some students do not eat breakfast. Therefore they started promoting regular sleep and healthy breakfasts, and nutrition tips.

As part of their healthy living focus, TSS successfully applied for HEHA nutrition funds for an oven for the Pareora site. This is being used for technology, to warm student lunches and to cook for events. In 2009, the student health teams plan to use HEHA funds to develop a booklet to give families simple and quick ideas about how to make healthy lunches. As a parent noted:

... parents need easy ideas about what they can do—they think making a home made lunch takes a lot of time.

As a result of the school focus on healthy lunches and zero waste, and the exploration of healthy living in the curriculum, staff observed that students are taking a lead in making healthy lunches for themselves as well as “educating their parents”:

... a lot of lunch boxes are healthy—parents are getting the message that it is good for their children. (Teacher)

School leaders commented on the cultural change they saw at the school. Rather than just “preaching” about good nutrition in the classroom, the school community is now “living and practising” good nutrition, to the extent that healthy practices are now embedded in school life.

Physical activity

Staff said that physical activity and sport is an important focus at their school, and students are “very active” with lunchtime games, as well as after- and inter-school sports. TSS has a two-year PE plan, with each term having a different focus. All teachers are encouraged to take their class for fitness three or four times a week. At least one large event is run each term such as swimming sports, athletics, cross-country and a gymnastics festival. The school has PE discovery days on Fridays during which students can try out lots of different activities to see which they enjoy.

TSS has recently completed two years of Active Schools PD. Staff commented they received a lot of support from the local college of education and Sport Canterbury staff. For teachers, a key part of this PD was moving beyond skill teaching to explore how they could involve students in developing new strategies for games. In Term 3, the PE focus was “Teaching games for understanding”. As part of the focus on PE and physical activity, experts visited to show teachers new ways of teaching skills and including students with special needs in class activities. School leaders considered this PD, which exposed teachers to new practices, was very valuable as it was becoming increasingly difficult to access specialist curriculum advisers.

- The school also has a number of links with local sports development officers. For example, the officer from a local rugby union took students for skills sessions. As one staff member noted: “We use these people as much as we can.” Teachers also make use of “snackivity” cards which suggest ideas for including physical activity into the curriculum, such as active spelling

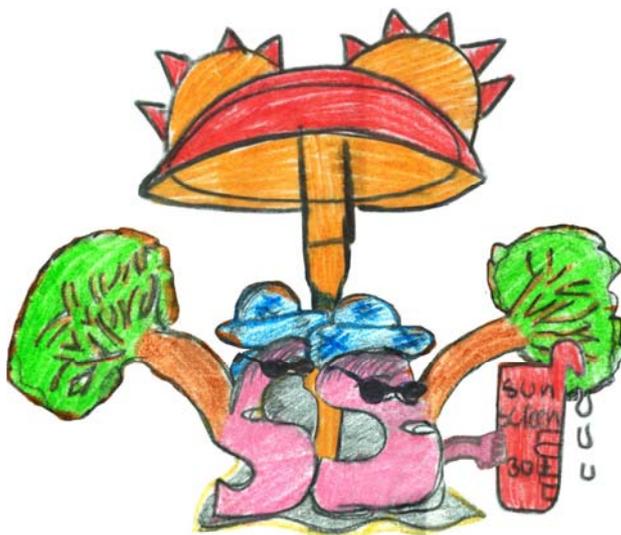
and number games. Another focus is on offering a range of lunchtime activities. Once a week the lunchtime is extended and staff lead a local bike ride. Staff noted they had changed their approach to lunch duty with staff organising a game or Jump Jam. When a group of student PALs was trained, after surveying their peers about the activities they liked, they took over running lunchtime games and managing student access to PE equipment. Other forms of activity are also encouraged. Many students already walk to school, and active transport is promoted in school newsletters.

Sunsmart

During 2007, schools in the FiS/WAVE cluster started working towards sunsmart accreditation. Prior to this, at TSS, sunsmart behaviours were optional; now they are part of school policy. The overall aim is to get sunsmart practice to be an “everyday thing”. As part of the update of policies and practices, a sunhat is now part of the school uniform. If students don’t have a hat they are required to play in shade areas at lunch time. These policies are supported by the Board of Trustees who provide sunscreen for all classrooms. The school endeavours to organise outside events so they are not at the hottest time of the day, and teachers are asked to do the same with their classes.

During 2007, a sunsmart unit was developed for use with classes. The unit covered areas such as the effects of UV rays. Students did a hat designing competition in class, junior students designed a sunsmart superhero and the student health team ran a sunsmart logo designing competition. The winning logo, which is used in school newsletters and documents, is shown in Figure 3.1. TSS was one of the first FiS schools in this region to be accredited, and the school held a celebration day to mark this event. All classes were involved in the sunsmart accreditation, and students are part of the further development of practices; for example, by assisting with the planting of shade trees.

Figure 3.1 **Winning sunsmart logo**



Smokefree

School staff noted that the school is smokefree and no one smokes in school grounds or during events. In 2005, prior to starting FiS, the current FiSC (in her previous role) supported the school to examine what it meant to be smokefree. This culminated in an event to mark World Smokefree Day which received media coverage, and was viewed by all as highly successful. With the support of Life Education, smokefree behaviour is covered in classes. TSS planned to revisit their approaches to smokefree in 2009 as part of the FiS/WAVE cluster focus on this area.

Environmental initiatives related to the four health areas

TSS has a number of environmental initiatives that connect with their health focuses. The District Council has a zero waste policy, and encourages schools to recycle by providing bins for organic matter, recycling and rubbish. In 2008, TSS participated in a zero waste event. For a few weeks students were asked to bring zero waste lunch boxes, for which they got points and prizes. Staff and students noted that a substantial proportion of students are continuing this focus beyond the competition. The District Council awarded participating schools with trees, and Environment Canterbury also give schools trees as an incentive for recycling paper. These trees are planted by staff, students and parents, and contribute to the school shade and fruit growing plans.

Both sites have clubs which maintain school vegetable gardens, and parents contribute by assisting with digging and composting. At Pareroa, students also work with the lead teacher to maintain the school flower gardens. Teachers noted that, as well as being a form of physical activity, gardening assists students to learn about healthy food and caring for the environment.

School staff actively looked for opportunities to maximise the learning opportunities possible from connecting health and environmental activities. For example, teachers linked the zero waste focus to healthy eating by exploring how pre-packaged foods are often less healthy. After a pumpkin soup day, students germinated the pumpkin seeds at school (as part of a science focus) then took them home. It is planned that the resultant pumpkins will be judged at school during a giant pumpkin-growing competition.

3.5 Connecting with parents and whānau

At TSS, parents support many of the school events that have a health focus, such as healthy lunch and soup days, school gardens, the sunsmart celebration and sports. Some also visit for special events such as lunchtime tugs-of-war, and others attend FiS/WAVE student leadership days. Parents are invited to school celebrations and assemblies. The school also uses local media to make sure school events have a high profile in the local community. Another focus is having regular messages in newsletters about healthy practices.

TSS prioritises parent consultation, and usually invites comment from parents for every main policy development or change in direction. The development of the nutrition policy (described above) is a recent example. Some parents are on the committee, and the wider community was

also invited to give feedback on the draft. Although it was sometimes hard to get parents involved, the parent representative considered TSS to have respectful ways of interacting with parents and asking for their views.

3.6 Student perspectives

During our visit to TSS we talked to five students who are members of the two health teams. These students had sophisticated views about health messages, and noted they and their peers are getting sick of the “Say no” or “Don’t do that” messages they are bombarded with during TV ad campaigns. They stated they already have a clear understanding of what constitutes healthy behaviours. As a result they are “trying to think about better ways to put things across” to their peers. Their ideas include using humour and skits to develop the health messages in the “Week that was” DVD, as well as the use of competitions, and certificates for students who are “caught being healthy”. Their current focus is on developing entertaining presentations to promote the health value of eating breakfast. After a presentation about the need to have a good breakfast, students noted their peers asked them a lot of questions, indicating a high level of interest.

Students are very enthusiastic about their health team activities, and noted as a result of their work they are learning detailed information about nutrition, how to be role models, and leadership, communication and ICT skills. In particular, students described how they are learning about consulting with other students, and strategies they can use to ensure all participate:

I’ve learnt to pick different people in the group to share ideas—not just use one person’s ideas, that is, mine!

In general, students considered these activities to be more interesting than the classroom work they do around the four health areas. One exception was a survey of lunch food that was part of the zero waste focus. Students were very surprised to discover how much unhealthy and packaged food they ate. This realisation, along with other school activities like the healthy lunch day, had prompted them and other students to make their own lunches or make changes to what they eat: “I asked my mum, instead of having a pack of chips, to give me popcorn and a carrot.”

Students considered school activities like the healthy lunch day and zero waste focus to be very successful. They also described how school practices were changing, “We’ve cancelled the fish and chips orders, ’cause that’s quite a fatty food”, and considered other students support these changes. School was not their only source of information about healthy eating. They also gained information from TV ads and programmes, 5+aDay posters in supermarkets and their parents.

Students at both sites agreed that their peers are “really into” physical activity, games and kapa haka and that the school provides lots of opportunities for them to try out a wide range different activities: “Our school loves doing heaps of activities and games.” These experiences were resulting in some of the more reluctant students finding activities they did enjoy. Competition between house teams at events such as athletics made “everyone really get into it”. Some students

had learnt how to teach Jump Jam, a very popular school activity: “Everyone gets into Jump Jam—you *can’t* not like Jump Jam!” Students noted that teachers were “big on us getting out” and also organised lunchtime activities. Although students valued this, like teachers, they considered the PALs to be more successful in selecting games that children wanted to play: “Because they are kids, they know what to do ... they organise things we *really* like, like obstacle courses.” Overall, students noticed a change at school: “We have a lot more games going on... and more kids getting out there and playing.” For most of the students we talked to, these practices are reinforced at home: “My parents are big on being active and not watching TV.”

Students considered TSS to have a strong sunsmart focus with sunhats as part of the uniform, and sunscreen available at school. Students could describe the school “no hat, no play” policy. They also recalled learning about the ozone and sunburn in class. TV was also a source of information about moles and skin cancer. Overall, students considered the school focus had made them more aware of the need to stay in the shade. Students reported most of their peers abided by school policies, but they also noted a few tensions. Some noticed teachers did not always reinforce or role-model these behaviours. Others commented that there was some resistance to the messages: “It’s hammered into us about wearing our hats! ... some seniors don’t think it’s cool to wear hats.”

Students considered they were too young for smokefree education but, given this, they had very clear recollections of the 2005 World Smokefree Day and were proud of the media coverage their school received. They described how they made wishes for a smokefree world, and named family members who had stopped smoking as a result of this day. Students in both groups were adamant they would not smoke in the future—citing their main sources of information about smoking to be Harold and Life Education, TV campaigns (such as not smoking in cars, graphic pictures of the effects of smoking and the story of the man who has throat cancer) and parents. They also noted some contradictions in young people’s views of smoking. In their age group, smoking was perceived as “very uncool”, but for the teenagers at the local high school it was “very cool”. They considered they had the skills to resist possible future peer pressure around smoking.

3.7 Challenges

One challenge for staff is that making changes takes time, requires a long-term commitment and vision and is an ongoing process of refinement rather than a one-off event. The survey process used to consult parents about the recent nutrition policy was viewed as successful, but this took quite a lot of time and work. Staff and parents noted it is important to consult the community, make changes slowly and promote a balanced approach rather than give directives. Those interviewed considered the school to be skilled at this. As with other schools, another challenge is encouraging busy parents to be involved with the school.

Sourcing funding to support health initiatives was a concern for school leaders who considered it would be difficult for the school to fund the fruit provision in its current form. They, as well as parents and students, are keen to see the fruit continued. TSS has yet to develop plans for this, but

it is likely they will plant more fruit trees and encourage parents to provide fruit. School leaders would like to see government funds spent on teacher release and resources for schools rather than administration. For example, the HEHA Nutrition Fund was a valuable support for school initiatives, but the reporting process (four per year) could be trimmed to one concise report.

3.8 Sustainability and where to next

Reflecting on the changes at their school since joining FiS, school leaders noted that their initial view of FiS was: “Just give us the fruit!” As they got more involved in cluster meetings and PD, and made changes, they started to see the variety of benefits FiS could potentially offer their community. Now FiS is viewed as “a wonderful opportunity to be involved in!” which had resulted in TSS being “well ahead of where we were two years ago”. Staff, parents and students commented that it took some time to build awareness in their community about healthy practices, but they could now see changes becoming embedded:

I think there’s been real change, and we’ve got the policies now that will ensure that it will continue. (School leader)

[Our health focus] has now become part of everyday life—it’s just what happens at our school. (Teacher)

One key shift for staff was the way Active Schools PD, PALs and the input of the student council and health teams, was increasing their awareness about the value of student-led initiatives. In the future they would like to see students continuing to further develop their roles as school leaders.

Overall, school leaders considered FiS to be a successful initiative that has “lifted the bar” for participating schools, whilst also having a wider influence on the practice of other schools. Staff were also observing a wider societal change, with students arriving at school from early childhood centres with more knowledge about healthy eating and sunsmart practices. Looking to the future, staff considered their strong relationships with local health promoters, in combination with the policies and systems they have developed, will enable them to continue improving their approaches to health and wellbeing in the longer term. Staff were keen to continue their journey through revisiting and building on current practices. Plans for 2009 include: a focus on smokefree; the allocation of management units to a sports co-ordinator to run activities and performing arts clubs; and enhancing approaches to teaching about nutrition through the use of a new resource; *Focus on Food: Thinking critically about food and nutrition* (Ministry of Education, 2008). The main plan of the student health teams is to develop a booklet of recipes for families.

4. Developing a network of student clubs at Titahi Bay School

4.1 Introducing Titahi Bay School

Titahi Bay School (TBS) is a decile 3 contributing school located in Porirua (an urban area in the greater Wellington region). The school has a roll of about 300 students, of whom about half identify as Māori, one-third as New Zealand European and one-sixth as Pasifika. The school joined Phase 1 of FiS in Term 4 of 2005. During our visit to the school we interviewed the principal, the FiS lead teacher, the enviroschools teacher, five students from the enviro-club and three students from the health team. We also talked to the FiSC who works with the school.

TBS aims to promote a family-orientated culture and has strong links with other local schools through the Achievement Porirua cluster. School leaders see the school's focus on health and wellbeing as fitting well with the overall direction of the school, with key priorities being literacy and numeracy, followed by physical activity and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Changing curriculum practice and focusing on democratic processes

Following a period of “getting the basics right” with Assess to Learn (AToL) writing and numeracy PD, and a focus on Māori and Pacific achievement, TBS is currently exploring the new curriculum. In 2008, staff trialled integrated and inquiry approaches, and in 2009 the school is starting a three-year curriculum planning cycle focused around school-wide “big ideas” or themes. Each curriculum area will be covered in this plan.

Staff noted that TBS currently has lots of health-related activities which are not co-ordinated, such as an enviro-club and health team. Teachers considered the activities with an associated curriculum focus to be the most successful. As part of the integrated plan the school aims to include these existing activities as a more explicit part of the curriculum. It is hoped this will act to strengthen the school's approach to health and wellbeing. In 2009, the year will start with a health-focused unit called: “Who are we?”

The school's recent PD programme is resulting in two key shifts in practice that also impact on TBS's approaches to health and wellbeing. One is an increasing focus on using school and community data to suggest priorities for action. Another is an emphasis on democratic education and decision making. For students, this means teachers are increasingly emphasising processes, such as co-construction and problem solving, to support students to develop the skills they need to identify and address their or others' health and wellbeing concerns. For parents, this means the school is increasingly seeking their views on priorities.

Leadership: Developing a critical mass of committed staff

Since joining FiS, for reasons such as staff turnover and health issues, the lead teacher has changed a number of times. TBS has also provided release time for different teachers to lead a number of health-related activities. Although this approach has resulted in a large number of students engaging in a wide range of activities like the enviro-club and health team, staff changes could sometimes slow the momentum. As a result, school leaders are planning to move to a team approach that more explicitly builds sustainability into the system. In 2009, a team of five teachers and their classes, and interested parents, will run the school's existing and new health and wellbeing activities. This team includes a teacher who will support the group to incorporate tikanga Māori. It is hoped that this will ensure more people can be involved in setting directions, the workload is shared, staff changes do not impact on the momentum of activities and succession planning is built into the system with mentoring for junior students as well as staff.

Student clubs and leaders

The school's prioritisation of healthy lifestyles and democratic processes has led to TBS tapping into students' passions by offering a wide range of leadership opportunities. Older students are promoted as role models, buddy patrols and monitors. A student council leads activities, some of which are health-related. One example is wheels days, during which students bring bikes or skateboards to school. The school has a number of student clubs. Some meet a particular need, such as a Girl Guides programme offered to girls identified as likely to benefit from extra support in developing relationship skills. Staff commented that clubs and activities are well-attended, and the broad range on offer is likely to enable all students to find an interest. The school has two main clubs with activities that link to FiS (described below) as well as a number of clubs and teams that promote physical activity (described later).

The enviro-club

TBS has a long history of environmental education. This started in 2003 when a group of parents developed a permaculture garden. In 2004 a teacher with a passion for gardening, and a number of students from different year levels, started running the garden. The group gained a bronze Enviroschools Award in 2007. In 2008, in recognition of how the school garden is assisting TBS to promote healthy lifestyles, a teacher was released from the classroom to run the enviro-club as well as some other activities. The enviro-club currently includes a large number of students and a parent. Students engage in a wide range of activities including managing the school vegetable garden, worm farm, recycling bins and litter collection.

Being part of FiS has provided extra resources for the club. When the fruit arrived, the group had a ready supply of fruit scraps to feed the worm farm. In 2008, with the support of the local FiSC, the school applied for HEHA nutrition funds for garden and cooking equipment so the enviro-club could offer regular healthy vegetable soup and bread lunches using some of the vegetables from the garden and some from 5+aDay. Since then, the enviro-club has run two soup days with parent support. Following these days, the soup recipe and extra vegetables are sent home.

Many of the club's projects are linked to a curriculum focus. In 2006, classes did an integrated unit on water and recycling; in 2007, TBS joined with other local schools to hold a community expo on energy saving. In 2008, the soup days had an associated persuasive writing exercise about promoting soup as a healthy option, and as a technology project, some students designed and built a water collector for the garden (as it does not have a nearby water supply).

Being part of the enviro-club offers students a wide range of leadership opportunities. They consult with other students, plan priorities and promote their work by educating younger students about recycling. Recently, supported by an enviroschools facilitator, students did a vision mapping and planned a consultation process. Their vision is: "Titahi Bay Enviro schools team want our school to be happy, clean, friendly, and long lasting." Currently the enviro-kids are in the middle of a consultation process to develop new priorities. To get input from others, students drew a map of the school to show the location of possible priorities (see Figure 4.1). The map is located in the library, and other students are invited to put stickies on to add their comments.

Figure 4.1 **Enviro-club consultation map**



Most of the new priorities are closely linked with the FiS health areas. Examples include: improving the hall so students can practise and perform plays and cultural group activities; the planting of fruit trees; and marking the field for sports practices.

Over time the enviro-club has made many connections with the wider community. The group uses compost from a neighbour and a relationship has developed to share water with the local playcentre, which has started a parallel garden. As well as connections with the local enviroschools facilitator and Greater Wellington Sustainability Trust, the school has links with the Porirua City Council which has a zero waste policy. Staff and students attend the council's Trash Palace courses on organic gardening and worm farming and the council manages the local recycling bins. Bunnings Hardware offers sponsorship and volunteers. Recently, to support the group's tree planting plans, a person from Wellington Regional Council was invited to talk to students about trees that grow well in the area.

The student health team

In 2008 the FiS lead teacher left, and a new teacher took over this role. One of her first activities was taking some students to a student leadership session run by local FiSC. Students were enthusiastic about this day and all decided their class would become a health team. With the support of their teacher and local FiSC, the students split into three groups each with a project: improving access to the PE shed; improving access to drinking water for students; and getting new fruit buckets. Each group is supported by one adult (the teacher, a Sport Wellington facilitator and the FiSC). The teacher is finding it beneficial to have the whole class working on projects, as, rather than being an add-on, this work can be woven into the curriculum. This also enables the class to learn more about working as a team. Students did a lot of brainstorming and group work as they planned a lunch fundraiser. In maths, students calculated what their costs would be, and how much to charge. They used their ICT skills to write articles promoting their activities for the TBS and local HPS newsletters. Students also ran a number of school surveys to ascertain other students' views, and called water filter companies to find out about costs and invite them to visit. Their teacher was enthused by students' commitment and considered the process let students "see their voices count". She was also enjoying the shift in her role: "That's the great part of it, you're a guide ... you're not driving it anymore—it's all student-led."

This approach is not without challenges. All those we interviewed commented they needed to do more work on changing other teachers' attitudes to ensure that access to the PE shed is equitable (currently senior students have priority). Staff are keen that students' projects come to fruition, but fundraising and accessing funds for expensive projects (such as a water filters) is hard.

4.2 Changes to the FiS health priority areas

As well as the initiatives described above, over time TBS has also made a number of changes to school policies and practices in the four FiS health areas (described below). To develop health and wellbeing activities the school has support from a range of local health promoters. The FiS student leadership workshops have been particularly helpful in driving current directions and giving ideas about managing student teams. The local FiSC supports the school with planning and accessing HEHA funds, but work pressures sometimes mean she is not always able to support the

student health team. The school has also developed useful connections with the CS, NHF, Sport Wellington and various environmental groups. Other providers who assist the school's health focus include the local dental nurse, a PHN who regularly visits to assist with physical and social wellbeing initiatives; Kia Kaha facilitators; and Life Education.

Healthy eating

Since joining FiS, TBS has made a number of changes to school food practices. In 2006 the focus was on promoting fruit and vegetables. Students explored good nutrition through activities such as looking at the amount of sugar in different foods. Since 2006, in consultation with the community, the school has developed water only and healthy lunch policies, and changed the lunch order menu to healthy options. In 2008, the new NAG added impetus to this process, and further changes were made to policies.

Healthy food is promoted at school events, for fundraisers, and staff model healthy behaviours. Students are involved in the distribution of FiS fruit, and teachers monitor students' lunches to encourage them to eat healthy food. School leaders and teachers particularly value the FiS fruit as it assists the school to promote healthy eating and "keeps the kids going", particularly those who do not have enough to eat. For these reasons, they would like to see it continue. To encourage younger children's interest in healthy eating, they also share the fruit with the local playcentre.

Students are encouraged to bring healthy options such as carrot sticks for shared lunches, and the school runs regular healthy lunch days. Staff talked enthusiastically about the recent soup days and noted how students really enjoyed the soup and taking vegetables home from the school garden. One teacher recounted a story about a student who insisted their family ate silverbeet from the school garden till it ran out. A focus on healthy eating is also woven into integrated curriculum units. Students learn about good nutrition, 5+aDay and cooking healthy food in connection with health- or technology-focused studies; and write recipes and articles that promote healthy eating as part of their literacy programme.

As a result of all these initiatives, in 2008 the school was awarded a silver School Food Award from the NHF, and they are starting to work towards a gold award. Recently staff had noticed that some students do not have breakfast, and in 2009, the school is planning to start a breakfast club. Other plans for 2009 also include holding more soup days, and the planting of fruit trees to ensure an ongoing supply of fruit.

Physical activity

Prior to FiS, TBS had an existing tradition of viewing physical activity as important for students. Staff noted that students are very active and the school offers a wide range of activities. Since joining FiS, the school has made new connections which have enhanced this focus. One emphasis is on students being active at lunchtime. The school had large grounds and fields and is well set up for outside activity. Sport Wellington facilitators have trained a group of student PALs who introduce their peers to new lunchtime games and show them how to use PE equipment. There are

plans to train two more PAL teams in 2009. Role modelling is another focus, with teachers also playing lunchtime games with students.

The amount of physical activity teachers do with their classes is up to individuals, with most trying to ensure their class does at least one session a day that is linked to current school-wide themes or the PE focus which changes each term. In 2008 the school had an Olympics theme and an associated school event. Sport Wellington facilitators assisted the staff to plan curriculum units, and a number of role models, such as a para-Olympian, visited the school. The school also runs at least one large sport event a term such as cross-country or tennis tournaments and students compete in houses. Staff also look for opportunities for students to participate in local events.

TBS holds Jump Jam sessions, has an active kapa haka group and takes students to local happenings such as performing arts shows. Performances such as the end-of-year show, “Snow bright and the seven dorks”, usually include activities such as kapa haka and dance. The school also makes use of local features and facilities such as beaches and parks. To provide swimming lessons, staff have recently negotiated access to share a local school’s pool.

The school endeavours to make connections to students’ weekend sports such as netball, hockey and soccer. In 2008, TBS provided skills training, held a soccer tournament and many of the students who play soccer went to watch David Beckham practise, and the international women’s under 17 soccer final. TBS has a large number of after-school sports clubs including cross-country, rugby and soccer. The after-school sports programme is run by an external provider, Kelly Sports, that also holds a cricket skills day each year and provides training to staff.

TBS reviews fundraising options to make sure they promote healthy lifestyles. Chocolate bars are now off the agenda and the next planned fundraiser is a triathlon. This will be woven in the PE programme, and students will be involved in organising as well as participating in the event alongside community members.

Over the past few years the school has taken part in a number of Walk to School weeks. Following a survey conducted by the enviro-club, which showed that many students preferred to walk or bike to school, in 2009 the school is planning to develop a walking school bus.

Sunsmart

Since joining FiS, TBS has re-committed to its sunsmart focus and has a “no hat, no play” policy. In 2007, the school contracted an agency to do a shade audit and started working towards sunsmart accreditation. Currently, TBS has nearly completed all the necessary requirements. The tree planting planned for 2009 will also increase the shade options at the school. To support the sunsmart focus, the Board of Trustees provides sunscreen in classrooms, and in 2008, a bulk order organised by the local FiSC resulted in TBS purchasing hats for all students. In the classroom, teachers cover sunsmart practices in Terms 1 and 4, as well as incidentally, and the school runs yearly events such as beach education days which include a substantial focus on sunsmart behaviours.

Smokefree

TBS is smokefree, has a smokefree policy and prominent signage. Smokefree behaviours are covered in the curriculum as part of a “healthy lifestyles” unit that is delivered in conjunction with Life Education. Smokefree behaviours are also covered incidentally in class if the need arises. Upgrading practices around the smokefree area has not been a recent focus.

4.3 Student perspectives

During our visit to the school, we talked to eight students from Years 4 to 6. They considered TBS to offer students lots of leadership opportunities and clubs, to the extent that all students can find an interest. They are passionate about the clubs and teams they are part of and could describe skills they are learning through this involvement. Team work is a big focus: “I used to never be able to work with other people, now I take on board ideas, as they are really good.” Another skill is prioritising. Students from the health team described how their teacher got them to do a “What’s hot, and what’s not” exercise to assist them to select three main ideas to focus on.

Students on the health team enjoy FiS student leadership days as these give them lots of good ideas to try out. The group who manage the PE shed noted they have learnt the difference between PE (*learning* games or skills) and physical activity (*playing* games). As a result they suggested that the “PE” shed be renamed as the “PA” shed.

Students who are part of the enviro-club are also proud of achievements such as the school garden and soup making days. Students considered the soup to be extremely popular with their peers. During one day “the *whole* staffroom was filled with enviro-kids!” as they organised the soup. They outlined a wide range of things they had learnt about gardening and vegetables, and also described how being in the enviro-club impacted on their home life. They cook the school-grown vegetables at home, and all are doing home gardening with their parents or other whānau. Some home gardens were started as a result of parents seeing how interested they were in the school garden. It was clear from students’ comments that activities at school had either sparked or enhanced students’ passion for creating a healthy environment and eating vegetables.

In terms of the four FiS health areas, students considered themselves to be well aware of healthy practices. They commented they know a lot about healthy eating and do activities such as packet reading. These students and their peers enjoy the fruit they get to eat at school, especially fruits like nectarines. They also like learning about making healthy food such as soups, fruit smoothies and fruit kebabs. They described how they learn about healthy and unhealthy food in class and noted TBS has a healthy eating policy, encourages students to drink water and has changed the lunch orders to healthier food. Most noted they did not eat much unhealthy food. Students had mixed views about whether school practices were influencing them and their peers. Teachers encourage them to eat sandwiches before unhealthy food, and some had made changes they linked to school practices: “I eat more fruit now ... I go home and eat fruit smoothies ...” Others noted that school and TV promote similar messages, and that programmes such as “Downsize Me” also

influence them: “If I eat junk food, I always run about at lunch.” A number came from families that do not eat junk food. Students considered their peers generally supported school policies, but noticed that a few still got “nothing healthy” in their lunch boxes.

Students reported they and other students are very active and are taken out for games every day. They described a wide range of activities to which they have access through school and how some of these are linked to a curriculum focus (such as the recent Olympics theme). They all enjoy Jump Jam and a range of activities such as kapa haka. They have access to sports equipment either in their classrooms or from the PE shed, and students like using equipment such as skipping ropes, moon hoppers, netballs, rugby balls and tennis rackets: “Ever since we got the tennis rackets, people use them a lot.” At lunchtime the middle and senior syndicates play games. Most are also active in playing sport outside school. Most enjoy taking part in Walk to School weeks and stated that kids would like to bike or walk to school, but this is not always possible if their parents work and need to drop them off.

Students in the health team are “trying to get the PE shed more usable” and have done a survey asking other students what equipment they like. The school upgraded the equipment as a result. To ensure more equitable and easy access to the shed, they are considering using the ideas gained at a student leadership day. Some have also trained or are planning to train as PALs.

When asked about school sunsmart practices, students knew about staying safe from the sun and about the school “no hat, no play” rule. They described how each student has a FiS sunhat, and that sunscreen is available in classrooms. A recent beach education day gave them a much more detailed understanding about sunsmart behaviours. Some were surprised to discover that “sun can burn you under water!”, and now understand why they need to put sunscreen on before swimming, and which types of hats are better protection. They also gained more knowledge about the effect of sunlight on the eyes. Students also get information about sunsmart practices from their parents, and TV ad campaigns about melanoma and “slip, slop, slap”.

Students considered they did not really cover smokefree behaviours at school. Most of their information about this area came from TV campaigns, such as the one featuring a man with throat cancer. Students are also aware of the dangers of passive smoking and noted that most of their family are “really strict” about not smoking in the house. These campaigns, and seeing family members die of smoking-related illnesses, had made all resolve not to be smokers. Given this, they noted some contradictions in the behaviour of young people: “Young fellas see all the ads, and see people dying, but they still smoke ... they think it’s cool.”

4.4 Connecting with parents and whānau

TBS sends frequent newsletters to parents, and staff noted they have good community support when children are involved in events or health-focused activities. Fifteen parents from a syndicate attended the beach safety day, and a number supported the soup days. The Olympics day had parent helpers as well as a good turnout from the community. Parents also support school sports.

TBS holds pōwhiri to welcome new students and staff, and has connections with the local marae. As part of the recent focus on raising Māori and Pacific achievement, staff have discussed ways they could make more bridges between school, home and students, and a number of changes have been made to the processes used to communicate and consult with parents, which staff consider are strengthening connections. One change is trying different ways to reach out to parents. Acknowledging their community includes many busy working parents, the school makes efforts to work around this. To build relationships with some families perceived to be “at risk”, which are not focused around concerns about student behaviour, school leaders now ring home to report students’ achievements. Another change is the way fundraisers are planned. These now capitalise on parents’ interest in seeing their children perform, as well as actively modelling TBS’s commitment to healthy lifestyles and student and community participation.

The school’s focus on democratic decision-making processes is also increasing the priority placed on seeking parents’ views about school actions. During parent–teacher interviews staff now have an open forum. A recent survey about the things the school is doing well, and future priorities, received a 96 percent response rate. A related hui for Māori whānau was also held. This information is being used to drive actions in the strategic plan. One priority is addressing parent concerns about children’s health. In 2006, TBS held a Health Expo at a parent–teacher evening. In 2008 the school ran a number of home–school partnership sessions, and in 2009 plans to offer parents health-related sessions in the areas the survey showed they were interested in (head lice, eczema, managing bedtime and nutrition). Some health-related priorities identified by parents have already been actioned such as providing swimming lessons and tree planting. The school is also engaging in a process of community consultation to redevelop the school vision.

4.5 Sustainability and where to next

This case study describes a school that has been part of FiS since the start. Some practices related to the FiS priority areas, such as the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity, appear to be well-embedded in TBS’s culture. School leaders noted they are seeing “a lot more awareness” about healthy lifestyles in the wider school community. Supported by activities such as FiS student leadership workshops, PAL training from Sport Wellington, as well as local health promoters and enviroschools facilitators, processes that ensure students and the community are involved in decision making are also becoming an everyday part of school life. As a result, TBS has a large number of students who are gaining valuable experience, knowledge and skills from their active contribution to the health and wellbeing of their school community.

At TBS, staff changes have sometimes affected the momentum of health-related activities, causing school leaders to rethink how they plan for, and manage, these activities. Staff now have a plan that is likely to ensure the school’s health-related activities are co-ordinated, closely linked to the curriculum and continuously built on, and therefore are sustained in the longer term as they become an integral part of how things are done at the school. Staff and students are enthusiastic about their plans for 2009 and the continuation of the student-driven health team and enviro-club.

5. Developing healthy heroes at Waitara Central School

5.1 Introducing Waitara Central School

Waitara Central School (WCS) is a decile 2 contributing school located in a small town on the outskirts of New Plymouth. The school has a roll of about 130 students of whom about two-thirds identify as Māori and one-third as New Zealand European. The school started Phase 2 of FiS in Term 2 of 2006. During our visit to the school we interviewed the principal, the FiS lead teacher, three classroom teachers, three students and six family members. We also interviewed the local FiSC.

When a new principal arrived in 2007 she found the school was in crisis. Finances were stretched, and some aspects of students' achievement was below national averages, suggesting teachers needed upskilling. A local gang culture, as well as student behaviour and truancy, were concerns. The principal instigated a programme of change which included team building for staff, a PD focus around assessment, literacy and goal setting and revision of the behaviour management system. She also started to explore how the school could foster students' and families' sense of pride in the school and wider community.

5.2 Becoming a Health Promoting School

School leaders were excited about FiS, and HPS philosophy that came with it. They saw it to be well-aligned with their priorities, and views about “feeding the whole child, not just the mind”. On joining FiS in 2006, the school developed action plans for the four FiS health areas, as well as a plan to address emotional safety. Over 2007–8 the school actioned the plans in three target areas—emotional safety, healthy eating and physical activity—and also had a minor focus on sunsmart. In 2008, WCS was launched as a HPS during an Olympics day at the school. This celebration acted to raise the profile of the school as health promoting, and was attended by students, staff and parents as well as community members such as the local mayor. Physical activity was the main FiS health area promoted, but there was also emphasis on the other FiS areas (e.g., healthy kai). This day was also used as an opportunity to consult with the community. Currently at a school-wide level, the focus is on weaving the HPS ethos into the way things are done so an inclusive approach to health and wellbeing becomes part of the school culture. This is reflected in a strategic plan target.

Developing a range of leaders

At WCS the overall approach to FiS/HPS is led by the principal and FiS lead teacher. The principal is keen that an inclusive HPS ethos spreads throughout the school, and so tries to ensure that planning and actions involve all staff. The FiS lead teacher also has a strong passion for HPS and is forming a Health Action team. This team includes the FiS lead teacher, the principal, the Deputy Principal (DP), teacher aides, family members and a Board of Trustees representative. In 2009 this team plans to use the data from a recent parent survey to reassess the school's needs. It is hoped that this will encourage approaches to be more community and data driven. The school also has student leaders who manage aspects of the health and wellbeing focus.

Using whole-school curriculum themes to explore the “big picture”

Staff at WCS noted that, like literacy and numeracy, health is a high priority. At WCS the curriculum is structured around one school-wide theme for each term, and integrated learning approaches are used. Rather than doing formalised planning around the health components of the curriculum, teachers tend to weave a health focus within the themes. The four themes for 2008, and the connections made with the school's health focus, are summarised as follows:

- Term 1, “The big splash”: This theme covered water safety and beach education, and included an exploration of sunsmart practices and different forms of physical activity at the beach.
- Term 2, “Matariki” (Māori New Year): As part of this theme students explored their whakapapa, and emotional and spiritual wellbeing. This culminated in a school event for which students researched and prepared healthy kai.
- Term 3, “Believe it or not”: This theme included a substantial focus on physical activity and healthy eating with students studying how people achieve world records. Students set physical activity goals and trained for an Olympics day.
- Term 4, “Treasures”: This theme included a focus on emotional health and motivation.

Each theme has some shared school-wide focuses, and depending on their class year level, teachers vary as to how they weave health and wellbeing into the themes. Teachers noted that much of the school's health focus is at the whole-school level, rather than within the curriculum. One exception is a school-wide healthy eating unit covered every two years. Strengthening the curriculum focus is on the agenda, with a group of staff working on developing a school-wide Health and PE plan for 2009 which includes a food and nutrition theme. An exploration of Māori health and spirituality is another priority. An associated PE plan for each term incorporates a focus on skill development, and the exploration of social and cultural aspects of physical activity.

5.3 Changes to school health priority areas

Over the last two years, WCS has developed many creative approaches to their three target areas. Particular school initiatives in emotional safety and the FiS health areas are described below, along with connections with health promoters. School leaders place a high value on the support

they receive from their FiSC who is active in guiding their journey as a HPS. They also gain valuable ideas or support from Sport Taranaki, the local DHB and through FiS cluster meetings. Staff commented on the strong connections they had made, and they are now looking for new relationships to support their health focus, such as with the NHF and CS. Teachers would like more people to visit and tell them about the support they could offer.

Emotional safety: Developing students as “heroes”

When setting health priorities during 2006, one area that clearly needed addressing was students’ self-esteem and relationship management strategies. The new principal has been particularly active in instigating practices designed to promote self-esteem and create a “family” culture. One focus is celebrating school winners or “heroes”. One school value, such as kotahitanga (unity) or whakawhānaugatanga (building relationships), is emphasised each week and students, family or teachers nominate students as a “hero” if they demonstrate this value. Students are encouraged to set related goals. Nominations are read out in assembly and rewarded.

The behaviour management system has also been changed to make it more inclusive and give more responsibility to students. Students are targeted for early intervention, and families are involved at an earlier stage. Staff, students and parents now use a contract process to identify each student’s strengths and next steps. Students with anger management issues may be invited to after-school Cool Change social skills and self-esteem workshops run by Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki, a kaupapa Māori health provider. The school is also monitoring bullying behaviour via a regular survey (but does not have a specific problem in this area).

To support their focus on students’ emotional wellbeing, the school also makes use of a wide range of other resource people including: RTLBs; teaching assistants; Social Workers in School (SWIS); PHNs; and a school chaplain. School leaders discuss concerns at a local school partnership meeting which includes representatives from three schools as well as the SWIS, PHN, RTLB and police.

Student heroes who are role models and leaders

Student role modelling is a big part of the hero focus. Year 6 students are promoted as role models and WCS emphasises tuakana–teina relationships, and has buddy classes. Another focus is student leadership. Twice a year, a new head boy and girl are selected. They run aspects of assembly and have other leadership tasks. The principal also has regular meetings with Year 6 students to seek their input. Students are able to suggest ideas and see them through. Student leaders present successes to the Board of Trustees. The heroes approach is linked to physical health through the promotion of students as “healthy heroes”. At lunch, student leaders organise for their peers to borrow equipment from the PE shed. Senior students helped set up the recent Olympics day, and coached juniors. The principal also organises visits by many New Zealand heroes who are active role models. Recent visitors include the All Blacks, members of the New Zealand women’s rugby

team, martial arts champions and a smokefree role model. Staff are keen to further develop this focus on student leadership. The principal is exploring how the school could use Hart's⁴ ladder of participation, and teachers would like to develop systems to ensure that student leaders are nurtured in the junior school.

Healthy eating

When they joined FiS, one of the areas WCS decided to strengthen first was school food practices. Since 2006, there have been a number of changes. One key change was closing the school tuck shop which sold unhealthy options. Staff, parents and students noted they expected some resistance to this decision, but in fact the community quickly got used to it and did not appear to miss the shop. Instead, the school developed healthy lunch and water only policies, and on Fridays, parent volunteers make and sell healthy lunches using ideas provided by students.

Students do classroom units on healthy eating, messages such as 5+aDay are promoted at events and teachers discuss students' lunches with them and praise them for bringing healthy options. When we visited WCS, students were learning about the importance of drinking water, and one class was trialling a Zazen water filter system.⁵

Staff and family members noted some parents are not totally supportive of the school's messages about healthy eating. Family members suggested there is a need to further "plaster around the benefits for kids", and staff are careful not to "over-monitor" students' lunch boxes. Despite this, all those we talked to considered practices in their community to be changing, and the free fruit and school activities to be contributing to this. Parents valued the fruit as it assists low-income families and exposes children to new types of fruit. Teachers and family members considered students to be drinking more water, eating healthier food and showing pride in their healthy lunches. Some family members talked about shifts at home that linked to the school's focus:

My kids understand the selection of vegetables now ... they tell me what apples they want when we go to the supermarket. [We get apples] instead of chips.

These perceptions are supported by the Healthy Futures student data. From 2006 to 2007, students had decreased their consumption of takeaways and fizzy drinks and increased the quantities of vegetables they ate. Students' knowledge about healthy eating had also increased.

Staff also noted they are trying to "walk the talk" and have replaced morning tea shouts of cakes and biscuits with crackers and salsa, and food rewards with healthy snacks such as frozen yogurt. As a result of all these activities, school leaders observed they did not have to make changes for the new NAG as they were already promoting healthy eating, and had policies in place. Plans for 2009 include a curriculum focus on nutrition and possible use of HEHA funding for water filters or to develop the food preparation area so that it is more user-friendly for students.

⁴ An example of the use of Hart's ladder is: http://www.thenext.org.nz/links/youth_part_policy.pdf

⁵ <http://www.zazenlivingwater.com.au>

Physical activity

Prior to FiS, WCS had a tradition of prioritising physical activity, with students often participating in local sports events or pōwhiri as members of the school's well-known kapa haka group. On joining FiS, the school elected to strengthen this focus. A school-wide plan was developed, the overall goal being to "improve participation, fitness, and motivation of all students ..." The plan covered the three aspects of HPS and included a focus on using policies and curriculum plans to promote physical activity, PD for teachers, daily physical activity for students and increasing community awareness and partnerships. In addition, a school-wide PE plan suggests that all classes aim to do three to four fitness sessions a week. If possible, fitness is linked to the curriculum. For example, during the Olympics theme, students trained for activities such as relays.

Over 2007–8 staff took part in the SCPAP⁶ initiative run by Sport Taranaki. Staff noted this PD was helping them develop their approaches to physical activity and PE. One change is a focus on supporting students to plan and design their own games and set physical activity goals. Staff are trialling a wide range of creative approaches to promoting physical activity. Some are making spelling and maths more active. During the "Treasures" theme, teachers ran an active natural treasure hunt at the beach. Others incorporate regular activity into the classroom programme. During the Olympics theme, students and staff were encouraged to record every 10 minutes of physical activity on a piece of paper shaped like a leaf. These leaves were used to decorate a "physical activity tree" in the foyer. This was remarked on by many school visitors.

This recent PD is also linked to other changes. WCS is well set up for outside activity with a large field, climbable trees, a pool, extensive courts and adventure playgrounds. All these support an emphasis on students being active at break times. The length of the morning break has been extended to give students time for "a good run round", and playground markings are being upgraded. Two teacher aides are timetabled to help plan games and support involvement and students are encouraged to climb trees and bring bikes and skateboards to school for wheels days. Active forms of transport such as "Feet first—walk to school every week"⁷ are promoted. The school also aims to make more use of facilities and resources in the local region. In 2008 some students attended a "gladiator day" at a local gym, others went on a sailing day. There are regular visits to the local beach. Students are encouraged to play inter-school sports, and increasing numbers are playing soccer and taking part in Weetbix Tryathlons.

Another focus is to expose students to a wider range of different types of physical activity. Jump Jam is run about four times a week in Terms 2 to 4, and teachers are trained in Jump Rope for Heart. Student-led activities are encouraged, with a group of students organising dance practices in the hall. Staff from Sport Taranaki regularly bring new equipment for students to try and, once a fortnight, a teacher loans a different piece of equipment. Recent examples include a croquet set

⁶ School–Community Physical Activity Project

⁷ <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/feet-first>

and tennis rackets. Students promote this equipment at assemblies, and when managing the PE shed. As a result, some parents described how they had bought similar equipment to use at home:

There's options [at school that] we didn't have as a kid ... I bought tennis rackets when they started tennis [at school].

To increase the amount of sports equipment available at the school, students are encouraged to bring in "yummy stickers" from supermarket apples to exchange for equipment. Each class also has a container of equipment for students to use.

Role modelling of active behaviours is a further focus. One example is the "sport heroes" described above. Staff are also trying to "walk the talk" by doing activities with students, and by planning a monthly staff activity such as a triathlon or kayaking. At staff meetings, one staff member will introduce a quick game that others can use with their students.

As a result of these initiatives, teachers and family members noted that students are more active:

The kids are more active, and more awake ... You don't see many kids at lunch or tea time doing nothing! (Family members)

Staff also considered the combined focus on emotional safety and physical activity was contributing to the school being "a lot calmer and happier" with fights in the playground now a rarity. In keeping with these views, at lunchtime, when we walked around the school, the grounds were a hive of activity with students engaging in a wide range of self-directed activities. Some were practising haka, skateboarding or soccer. Others were using equipment from the PE shed, playing ball using the playground markings or playing on the adventure playground, courts or field. Seniors were supporting younger students. In the future, the school plans to continue building on these approaches and to develop a sports academy which draws on local resources.

Sunsmart

Prior to FiS, WCS had a "no hat, no play" policy, but the provided hats tended to "go missing". On joining FiS, the school re-committed to its sunsmart focus. In 2007, policies were updated and teachers started encouraging students to stay in the shade. Sunsmart practices such as "slip, slop, slap" are covered at beach safety days, and classes have factor 30 sunscreen. Staff try not to hold outside events and swimming during the hottest part of the day, and are working towards getting shades over the pool. Although they had made changes, teachers noted there "needed to be more rigour" in the modelling and monitoring of sunsmart practices. Given this, all those interviewed were seeing an increase in students' sunsmart behaviours which they attributed to an increased emphasis at school and local early childhood centres, as well as messages from home and TV:

My son ... it's the last thing he does before he leaves the house in the morning ... he puts sunblock on. (Parent)

Kids are becoming more conscious about it ... they come up and ask for sunscreen. (Teacher)

In terms of future projects, finances are a concern. Family members commented that the school needed more money for hats, as the current ones were not wide enough for maximum protection.

Smokefree

WCS has a smokefree policy which teachers and family members noted is nearly always respected. Smoking in the school and wider community is a concern, therefore the school had some emphasis on smokefree behaviours. Staff organise for smokefree role models to visit, and have recently been taking a tougher line on student smoking. Two students caught smoking were stood down—sending a message that this was unacceptable. Staff noted there have not been any further incidences. A number of staff are smokers and, since the school became a HPS, some have stopped. Others have changed their practice of “smoking around the corner” and now only smoke when they are well away from the school. The Board of Trustees is supporting staff to quit by offering free patches. The school has not yet had a formal focus on this area, and is planning to do so in 2009.

Environmental activities related to the four FiS health areas

To ensure the sustainability of the FiS fruit, the school has a tentative plan to develop an orchard. Taranaki DHB has assisted with some funding, and planting has started with feijoa trees and passionfruit vines. School visitors are also encouraged to donate trees to the school. As well as fruit trees, the school also plans to grow plants that are significant for Māori health. One concern is that the school is not fenced and has experienced some difficulties with vandalism. Another project linked to FiS is a vegetable garden and worm farm developed by some Year 6 students as part of the Matariki celebrations. Future plans include the development of a composting system.

5.4 Student perspectives

During our visit to WCS we interviewed three Years 5 and 6 students, including a head boy and girl. These students talked about how their school is health-promoting, and described recent changes to school practices in three FiS health areas. They had a good awareness of healthy behaviours in these areas and were also able to describe related changes they had made at school or at home. Students noted it was difficult to attribute these changes to any one thing, but considered school practices, along with parents and TV, to be the main influencing factors.

Students liked the “healthy heroes” focus at their school, and stated: “Year 6s have to be the best they can be ‘cause they are the role models.” It is important for them to set an example for younger students by showing them “how to be healthy and active”. Students have noticed that “since we have a new principal, new ideas are coming in”. It is a growing aspect of their school culture “to encourage each other”. Other new ideas are the head boy and girl system, and the way students are increasingly taking a lead in running activities such as assemblies. These students

relished their leadership opportunities. Although they ended up with “extra jobs”, they considered they are having valuable experiences that will give them the skills they need at high school:

... we are learning how to be responsible ... it helps us keep active ... we learn how to communicate with everybody else ... even staff members!

When talking about school food practices, students stated: “We’re a healthy school—that’s why we don’t have the tuck shop open!” They had a good knowledge of the school healthy eating policies, noting their school is “water-only”, and no lollies or chocolates are allowed. A recent focus on the health benefits of water is encouraging them to drink more water:

I’m having less juice and stuff ... I used to have juice after school, and juice in my water bottle ... but now it’s all water, and I only have juice *every* so often.

Students considered being a FiS school encourages them to eat more fruit. The school focus on healthy food, in combination with other influences, is also changing their eating patterns. For example, if they purchased lunch on Fridays they select the healthiest option. One student noted that school fruit, along with the programme “Downsize Me”, influenced him to eat less junk food: “I used to go home and eat a lot of junk food and all that. But now I go home and eat an orange.”

Students talked about the many opportunities they have to try out equipment and activities at school, and listed a wide range they had tried including kapa haka, touch, wheels days, tennis, sailing, swimming, croquet, inter-school sports as well as a range of activities on camp. They also reported that most students are active at break-times and often use equipment from the PE shed. To share the work of managing this shed, the head boy co-opted some of his friends. This group developed a roster so that they all have time to be active themselves as well as run the shed.

Students also noted that teachers often did short bursts of activity to break up class work, and usually linked curriculum work to some form of physical activity: “Every time we study something, we do something active with it.” In 2008, students studied the Olympics and then took part in an Olympics day. In a previous year they had done a similar thing with a rugby study.

As they got older, students were more conscious of the range of activities they could do, and they were more aware of the importance of being active. Students noted that most of their information about being active came from “home and school”. Like their parents, students described how they took school ideas home. For example, trying out croquet at school had led to changes at home: “I used to be a couch potato and watch TV ... now I go out and play croquet with my family.”

In regard to sunsmart practices, students noted WCS has a longstanding policy, and over the past couple of years awareness about this is increasing: “We always had them [policies] but no-one really listened but now they’re starting to listen, and better ...” This was attributed to teachers getting “tougher”. Students brought their own hats or wore school hats. Classes have sunblock, which is mostly used for class trips. Over time students have become more conscious of sunburn and considered all students to be getting better at making sure they did not get burnt. They also noticed that more junior students are wearing hats. As well as practices at school, these changes were also attributed to parental encouragement and TV ad campaigns about skin cancer.

Students noted that they did not get a lot of information about smokefree behaviours at school. Mostly this comes from the role models who visit the school: “Basically ... all the role models that come to our school talk about how bad smoking is for your health.” Students liked the visiting role models, and thought younger students listened to their views. Students commented that their peers at other schools smoked a lot. There were a couple of students at WCS who smoked, but not as many. Most of their information comes from TV ad campaigns which show images of the effects of smoking. These are having a powerful impact on students’ determination not to smoke. All the students have family members who smoke, and the students are trying to influence them:

My mum and dad still smoke. I say ‘Hey mum and dad, you should stop smoking ‘cause it could damage my health from the smoking, and damage your health.’

5.5 Connecting with family and the wider community

WCS has an open door policy and a number of family members are involved in the day-to-day running of the school including health-related activities. One group organises the playground painting, another looks after the new water filter system and others assist with Friday lunches and the distribution of fruit. A school grandma is involved in many activities. Family support school trips and the kapa haka group, coach sports teams and run events such as “Phat”, a karaoke competition between local schools. Some parents are teaching or administration assistants.

Staff and family members reported a good turnout at events like a recent beach treasure hunt day, and activities that involve student performances. Family members considered awareness about health and wellbeing was growing in the community, helped by things like the regular HPS section in each school newsletter. One concern for school leaders and family members is increasing the number of parents who are actively involved in the school. Family members noted it tended to be the same people who volunteered, and it was hard to get others involved. They commented the school had tried “everything” including home–school partnership sessions. One difficulty is that many parents work. They and staff considered a next step would be to identify parents with specific skills and shoulder tap them as “it’s nice to be asked”.

The school is placing increasing priority on involving and consulting families. Whānau are involved in decision making, and go to events such as FiS hui. Over the past few years the school has tried a number of different ways to get input from the community. One example is an anonymous feedback slip attached to every newsletter. To consult with Māori parents, staff phoned each whānau to ask for feedback. A number of surveys have been sent to parents. A recent HPS survey about the school’s health focus, that was held during the Olympics day, got a high response rate. The top three things parents thought the school was doing well were the focus on healthy eating, physical activity, and free fruit. These data are part of a needs assessment that will help the school Health Action team revise priorities in 2009.

In keeping with their focus on fostering a “family approach” and a sense of community, the school has plans to make more connections to the parent community and hold more events. In 2009 the school plans to start a “parent room” in an empty classroom. This will be a lounge for parents to drop in, have a coffee and network. The aim is to build relationships and increase parents’ confidence about engaging with the school. To support parents to access information about health and parenting, brochures, posters and a list of contacts of people in the community will be available. This room will also be used for parent education classes and a language nest. School leaders also noted they need to strengthen connections with Māori whānau and local iwi, and place more emphasis on tikanga. The teacher who mentored the school kapa haka group, and provided support around tikanga, had recently left and this has left a gap.

In 2009 the school plans to host the AmeriCARna Car festival. Health is promoted at these sorts of events by, for example, offering healthy hangi kai.

5.6 Sustainability and where to next

Since joining FiS, a key change for WCS is the way an HPS ethos is now woven throughout school practice. As one teacher noted: “It’s becoming who we are ... what our school stands for.” This, and the way HPS is visible in the strategic plan, shows the school is “in for the long haul”. Those with whom we talked described how the whole school community is starting to “walk the talk”. In terms of the FiS priority areas, the school has made a wide range of changes to the way healthy eating and physical activity are promoted. It is clear that becoming a HPS, and the connections that are being forged through FiS, are having a pivotal impact on school policies and practices as well as students’ health knowledge, and school and home behaviours. Staff also linked positive changes in students’ wellbeing, behaviour and attendance to their health focus.

The continuation of the free fruit was a concern for all interviewed, as was resourcing for extra sunhats, sunshades and sunscreen. Staff noted that sustaining the free fruit in its current form was in the “too hard basket” because it might require school funds. Staff considered that, for initiatives like FiS to be successful in low-decile schools (which tend not to have access to extra funds), they needed ongoing support from the Government.

Looking to the future, staff, students and family members are keen to carry on promoting health and wellbeing in their community, and have a variety of plans which include a continuation of current approaches, as well the development of new priorities.

6. Supporting students to “choose to be healthy” at Park Estate School

6.1 Introducing Park Estate School

Park Estate School (PES) is a decile 1 contributing school located in an urban area in Papakura, Auckland. PES serves a community with a large Māori and Pasifika population. The school has a roll of approximately 157 students, of whom about 60 percent identify as Māori and 20 percent as Pasifika. The rest are from a range of other nationalities. In 2005, PES was a struggling school. New leadership has meant the school has been making changes on a number of fronts. These changes were positively commented on in the 2006 Education Review Office report. To drive future directions, the school is currently developing a new strategic plan and mission statement.

PES is a Phase 3 FiS school that has been working towards becoming a sustainable HPS since it joined the FiS initiative three years ago. PES is working hard to create a holistic learning environment for students. Part of this is an emphasis on student health and wellbeing alongside core areas such as literacy and numeracy. The wellbeing focus is supported by the Board of Trustees and staff.

During our visit to the school we talked to the principal, four classroom teachers, the FiS lead teacher, six students and an administrator. We also talked to two whānau members, as well as the local FiSC.

6.2 School-wide approaches to health and wellbeing

PES has a holistic approach towards hauora/health and wellbeing that acknowledges the physical, as well as the social, emotional and environmental aspects of health. Three of the FiS health areas are a particular focus at the school: healthy eating; physical activity; and sunsmart.

All staff are part of the school’s emphasis on integrating a focus on health and wellbeing into everyday practice. A key goal of the school is to work towards being a sustainable HPS. (In this region, schools’ progress towards sustainability as a HPS is recognised through the Tipu Ka Rea operational model, which has three levels “Manuka”, “Kowhai” and “Kauri”.) At present, the school is working to achieve the Kowhai level by focusing on raising awareness about being a HPS school and encouraging involvement from the whole school community. Teachers, students and school leaders call PES a “healthy school” and this message is promoted as parents enrol their children. The intent is that the school community will develop an awareness that the school is a

HPS at an early stage. To give students ownership over the school's emphasis on health and wellbeing, the idea that they can "choose to be healthy" is promoted.

Leadership and modelling of healthy behaviours

While the Board of Trustees and the principal at PES actively support the school's health focus, it is the FiS lead teacher and teaching staff who put it into practice. The FiS lead teacher has adopted a proactive approach and designs processes to encourage "whole-school" involvement in FiS and HPS activities. Some staff (i.e., support and admin staff, the FiS lead teacher, the health and PE curriculum leader and classroom teachers), are members of a Parkee's Pathway team. The aim of this team is to create a positive environment for both teachers and students. Recognising that health and wellbeing plays an important role in a positive school ethos, one focus is on organising health-related activities. Another focus is running social events for staff and school discos.

Staff acknowledge the importance of "walking the talk" in terms of healthy lifestyles. As role models they bring healthy lunches themselves and wear hats when outside.

In terms of PD, teachers at PES have had the opportunity to participate in initiatives such as Active Schools (a SPARC initiative), and can request a refresher if needed. In addition, the FiS lead teacher attends FiS workshops and cluster meetings. These offer her the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with representatives from other schools.

A focus on student outcomes and leadership

At PES, the vision is to steer children in the direction of making healthy choices for themselves. As a result, the school hopes students will develop healthy sustainable habits that will filter out to whānau and friends. School staff also recognise that improved nutrition and increased physical activity have the potential to positively impact on learning outcomes.

Students are encouraged to take ownership over their, and others', wellbeing. There are many opportunities for students to be actively involved in health and wellbeing activities and many do so by acting as PALs who inspire juniors to stay active at lunchtime, fruit monitors who manage the daily preparation and delivery of free fruit to their peers and peer mediators who assist students in resolving conflicts.

The school also has a student health team. These students initiate regular activities that are connected to the FiS health areas. This involvement allows students to develop leadership skills as they promote health and wellbeing in ways that relate to their and other students' interests. The health team meets with the health lead teacher on regular occasions to discuss any concerns they may have and also collaborates with the Parkee's Pathway team.

Locating FiS health areas within an integrated curriculum

The Health and PE curriculum is a high priority at PES, and the use of integrated learning in combination with an inquiry approach is a feature of the learning programme. Staff considered these approaches also support them to focus on the FiS priority areas. In 2008 the whole-school theme was “Wonders of the world”, within which aspects of health and wellbeing were explored in connection with a range of other curriculum areas. In class, for example, students looked at “human wonders” and researched the factors that enabled athletes at the Olympics to perform on both a physical and psychological level. A “Healthy eating” unit was also taught in all classes during one term. During this unit, students researched healthy foods and looked at the language of food advertising.

In addition to giving the Health and PE curriculum high priority, staff at PES focus on health and wellbeing within other subjects. Teachers commented that there is potential for health and wellbeing to be approached through any curriculum area and noted that students do sketches about “how to be healthy”; investigate aspects of the four FiS health areas by using statistical methods; and regularly discuss good eating habits in class. This adds context to school focuses and also allows for a more sustainable approach as a focus on health and wellbeing becomes part of everyday teaching and learning rather than an add-on that can be easily ignored or forgotten. Teachers commented that the new curriculum will be positive in that it will push health and wellbeing “to play a big part of the curriculum” and thus further the integration of FiS goals with the school culture.

6.3 Changes to health-related initiatives at PES

Since joining FiS, the school has focused on three health areas in particular: healthy eating; physical activity; and sunsmart. FiS has supported an upgrade of practices and policies in these areas. As mentioned above, the school is aiming to integrate their approaches throughout all levels of the school system. Particular initiatives in each of the FiS areas, as well as the school’s focus on emotional wellbeing and the environment (which school staff see as connected to the FiS health areas), are described below.

Healthy eating

Since PES joined FiS, healthy eating has been a strong focus. Walls are clad with drawings and messages that promote good nutrition, and when parents enrol their children they are advised of the school’s healthy food policies. In class, teachers discuss the benefits versus the consequences of eating healthy and unhealthy food to increase students’ awareness of *why* eating well makes a difference. Students are taught about “everyday foods”, “sometimes foods” and “occasional foods” (messages that also go home to parents in newsletters) as a way to differentiate between foods that can be eaten regularly and what is considered a treat.

To encourage students to bring healthy lunches, PES has adopted a reward system called “Caught being healthy”. When children are “caught” with a healthy lunch, they are given a token. At the end of the week, fruit is sent home with the student who collects the most tokens. Teachers considered this system to be very successful as more students are bringing healthy lunches, and children are proud of this, and therefore want to let their teachers and peers know.

PES also offers students lunch orders every Friday. While the menu formerly consisted of items such as sausages and chocolate bars, FiS has spurred the school to improve the nutritional standard of this food. The Parkee’s Pathway team researched healthy options for lunch orders by testing the nutritional value of food as well as exploring food safety requirements. As a result staff improved their nutrition awareness, and used this knowledge to develop Nutrition Guidelines. This change to the lunch menu was done in collaboration with the NHF, that has rewarded PES with a bronze Heartbeat Award for their efforts. The school aims to achieve the silver Heartbeat Award in the near future. The school’s improved Nutrition Guidelines and Health and Safety Guidelines (which encourage teachers to be role models), are now an integrated part of the School Guidelines Manual and are used to guide new developments.

The lunch orders offer the children an opportunity to “choose to be healthy”. This choice is also available for children who are sent to school with food such as a bag of chips. They can choose to swap these for a piece of fruit. Children who arrive at school with no lunch are offered a sandwich and fruit. Other healthy eating activities include “sandwich making days” where students and teachers make their own sandwiches with healthy fillings. Each lunch break ends with a tooth brushing session, sponsored by the local DHB.

In addition to the “Caught being healthy” system, PES now uses healthy food as incentives. For example, the school has a Tidy Kiwi Award which encourages students to keep the school grounds clean and neat. The reward, which used to be a chocolate bar, is now a home-baked “healthy” slice.

PES’s student health team has played an active role in many of the above initiatives. In 2008 the team organised a whole-school survey about the changes in the lunch order menu to ascertain what their peers thought about the new food options. They also initiated a poster competition (for a Tidy Kiwi promotion) about putting rubbish in the bins. To align with FiS goals, they offered prizes of fruit packs and healthy lunch combos. In addition, members of the health team are responsible for the weekly “Caught being healthy” award and promote healthy eating (as well as the other FiS areas) at assembly.

The Healthy Futures student survey data support staff’s perceptions that, in combination, these various activities are having an impact on students’ behaviours. These data show that, since the baseline, the number of students who reported eating both fruit and vegetables has nearly doubled, and the number reporting eating unhealthy options has decreased.

Physical activity

A focus on physical activity has long been a strong feature of PES, and as such, embedded practices already support the physical activity focus of FiS. The school regularly attends local sports events along with other schools in the region. In 2008, the school community participated in summer and winter sports as well as athletic and cross-country days. In addition to these events, a handball competition was organised for PES students by student leaders.

PES is an Active School and collaborates with SPARC and Counties Manukau Sport to improve physical activity opportunities for its students and access PD for teachers. PD sessions tend to take place prior to each school sports event such as cross-country. That way, teachers can gain skills and ideas about how to integrate physical activity related to this event into the curriculum so that this prepares students for the event.

At PES, students take part in skills sessions three times a week and also do three shorter fitness slots. In addition, PALs lead lunchtime sports for the junior syndicate twice a week. Students are also able to engage in a wide range of other activities to support them to stay active. These include: Jump Rope for Heart organised through the NHF; the use of Push Play resources; Jump Jam; water safety through WaterSafe Auckland Inc.; practising and performing kapa haka; and hip hop dancing. In addition, the school is considering introducing a walking school bus where parents take turns to walk the children to school as a safe and active option.

Sunsmart

PES has a “no hat, no play” policy which means that children who don’t wear hats have to spend their breaks in the library. Hats are compulsory in Terms 1 and 4 during which lunches are always eaten in shade provided by mature trees and shade sails. Staff noted that senior students have really taken this on and show a strong sense of responsibility in regards to being sunsmart. The school encourages the children to wear sunscreen and it is provided on excursions and events. While FiS has helped increase awareness in this area, staff noted it is always on the agenda due to a strong push from the Government to keep the momentum going. One current priority is to maintain the school shade areas (as shade sails were vandalised) with staff looking for possible sources of funding.

Again, the Healthy Futures student survey data suggest that school practices are having an impact. Since the baseline, the number of students who reported wearing sunhats at school “most of the time” has increased, and the number who reported they regularly got sunburnt has decreased.

Smokefree

Staff acknowledged that smokefree was not an area that has been given particular attention since the school joined FiS. The school has been smokefree since it was legislated, and there are stickers advising it is a smokefree zone. Teachers did not consider student smoking to be an issue at PES but did recognise that the area may need some attention in the future.

Emotional and social wellbeing

PES's holistic approach to hauora recognises emotional and social aspects of wellbeing. Therefore, the school works closely with local providers. In addition to the health promoters, they have made connections with through FiS and HPS, PES collaborates with police educators to offer programmes such as Keeping Ourselves Safe, which prepares children to cope with situations that may involve abuse, and the anti-bullying initiative Kia Kaha. The school is also part of the Cool Schools initiative, by which students learn skills and processes that enable them to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. Senior students can become actively involved in the programme as peer mediators who are trained to act as "peace keepers" at the school. A student who is faced with a minor conflict can choose to see the peer mediator. If the issue is serious (e.g., fighting), however, the peer mediator may refer on to the duty teacher. School leaders noted that these initiatives complement FiS as they help create a safe and peaceful learning environment for students.

Environmental projects connected to FiS

PES has a number of environmental initiatives, some of which are linked with FiS health areas or use HPS processes such as health teams. Recently, PES planted an orchard on the school grounds. The planting of fruit trees was identified by the FiS cluster as one way of encouraging continued fruit consumption after the end of the FiS initiative. PES accessed money from the HEHA Nutrition Fund for this project. It is planned that activities relating to the orchard will be connected to teaching and learning, particularly in health and science. The school also has a worm farm which feeds mostly on fruit waste.

For the student health team, one key project is Tidy Wednesdays and the related Tidy Kiwi promotion. The aim is to increase awareness about litter around the school, encourage students to take responsibility for keeping it tidy, and motivate children to reduce waste. While no decisions have been made yet, a vegetable garden on the school premises is being considered as a future development.

6.4 Building connections with the local community

An emphasis on making links with local schools and the community to support their initiatives is a feature of PES. Being a FiS and HPS school has led to increased engagement with all of the following: Counties Manukau DHB and HEHA co-ordinators on initiatives such as "Let's beat diabetes"; Counties Manukau Sport, in regards to Active Schools and Push Play; Papakura Council through Wastebusters; and the local PHN. In addition, the landscape designer who planted the orchard is responsible for maintaining it.

The school is also part of the Papakura Achievement Initiative, a Ministry of Education led project in which local schools meet to discuss how they can work together to achieve the best outcomes for students. Its current focus is literacy.

6.5 Student perspectives

During our visit to PES we talked to six students from Years 5 and 6, some of whom are part of the health team. These students appeared to have a high level of awareness about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and showed great enthusiasm about the free fruit, eating healthy food and keeping active and fit. While the school, in combination with initiatives such as FiS, has played a vital role in influencing students' habits, they also talked about the significant impact media has on their thoughts and behaviour. Whilst these two sources of healthy lifestyle messages appeared to complement each other well, the home environment was mentioned as a place where different ideas and attitudes sometimes arose. Students described how they are trying to influence their parents to provide them with healthier lunch options, but this did not always happen. Others explained how they had influenced parents and aunts to smoke "out of sight", but it was hard for family members to completely quit smoking.

In general, students were happy to share a number of changes they had made to improve their lifestyles and talked about how some school messages are starting to filter through to family members. Healthy eating is an area that students are particularly enthusiastic about. They explained how they had learnt at school about the food pyramid, the red and green tick on food packets and how to differentiate between everyday and occasional foods. They have all "decided to eat healthy" and some now have healthy dinner days at home while others have "changed chips for rice crackers" or "stopped sneaking chocolate out of the cupboard".

The free fruit is something the students particularly like. It wasn't only the idea that fruit keeps them healthy that was appealing to them, they also get excited about trying fruit and vegetables they have not eaten before. In addition, they have realised that if they keep trying something they don't initially like, they may end up liking it. Kiwifruit and rockmelon fall into this category.

Students are also very positive about the new lunch order choices and all thought the healthy options are much better than what used to be on offer. Junk food, they explained, has now become a "sometimes food" instead of an everyday thing.

As mentioned above, PES is an Active School. This was clearly evident when the children started to name all the activities they took part in during the week. Push Play games, fitness and the focus on the Olympics as a whole-school theme appear to be particularly popular. The students expressed a broad understanding of why they should keep active as they explained how it helps keep a healthy weight, prevents diabetes, averts obesity and, most importantly, "it makes you happy because you are having fun".

It was obvious that all students kept very active while in school, and they had also made recent changes to what they did in their spare time. Many, who previously did not like sport, reported they now play rugby or netball on a regular basis. Most also spend less time in front of the TV, computer or play station and instead go for walks or play outside. Some also try to spread healthy messages to other family members: "I told my mum to buy a treadmill."

When asked about school sunsmart practices, students named the school “no hat, no play” policy. Students also described how they sing songs about sunsmart, and apply sunscreen before they go to school in the mornings. They understood that too much sun could cause cancer and therefore wear their hats every day. In addition to school policies, the “slip, slop, slap and wrap” ad campaign appears to have had a strong impact on students’ awareness.

Although PES has not yet highlighted the smokefree area of FiS, these students are very aware of the consequences of smoking. In terms of school approaches, they mentioned posters and stickers around the school grounds and talked about a speech in assembly about lung cancer and how smoking had been discussed in class. Media campaigns appear to be having the strongest impact on their attitudes towards smoking, particularly the scare tactics of showing photos of black lungs and toes. The general attitude was that they would “never ever” smoke and that when they get the opportunity, they tell other people how bad it is for their health.

6.6 Connecting with parents and whānau

PES has found it hard to engage with parents and whānau, and while they have tried holding hui, fono and parent evenings, they see their community as a difficult one to involve. Successful initiatives which are well attended include cultural evenings and various sport events. The latter often attract many enthusiastic parents and whānau who come to support the children. On Fridays, one parent drops in to help with the lunch orders.

During our visit to PES we had the opportunity to talk with a parent and an aunty who expressed great appreciation for the free fruit that FiS provides. They also had some involvement with school activities. The aunty helps with kapa haka if needed, and supports teachers on some school trips. One of these was to Mangere Mountain where students learnt about native plants, traditional Māori ways of growing kumara, potato and silverbeet, and the tools that were used.

Newsletters are used as the main means by which parents are informed about matters related to health and wellbeing. Sometimes these include messages in te reo Māori about “making food healthier”. Information also goes home to parents in children’s portfolios:

We are still trying to get parents on board and would like to see whole-school partnership particularly with regards to the curriculum ... we want to try and get them to take on a more active interest, so we have a shared vision. (School leader)

PES has designed a health survey to be distributed to parents in 2009. The survey aims are to support the school to gain a better understanding of parents’ awareness of current school activities, and provide information about which areas of health and wellbeing parents find important. The results will help guide the school’s health planning for the coming year.

6.7 Challenges

PES has found it hard to connect with some parents in regards to school approaches. While most children now bring healthy lunches, a few parents are not yet on board with school policies. Staff are asking themselves how they can encourage these individuals:

Teachers can't remove unhealthy lunches from children ... monitoring is a grey area as well.
All we can do is promote it, advise parents what a healthy lunch looks like. (School leader)

Like other schools, teachers noted that it tended to be the same parents who come and help out with school lunches and at events. They are hoping that the parent survey may offer some answers, and that it may also spark interest about health and wellbeing in the school community.

In the initial stages of changing school policies, there was also some resistance amongst a few teachers (as is common with any changes that are implemented) but staff report that all now support the school's emphasis on health and wellbeing and related activities.

6.8 Sustainability and where to next

Overall, staff considered that FiS has “added quite a bit of punch” to ideas that were already simmering, and see FiS as a great addition to their focus on creating a better learning environment for students:

It's [FiS] now part of school culture ... it has changed the philosophy in the school.
(Teacher)

It's so great to have something to offer when kids don't have anything to eat. (Teacher)

Staff at PES have observed many positive changes which they attribute to FiS, and in particular, the free fruit. School sores, for example, have become much less of a problem, bringing down an overstretched first-aid budget to normal expenditure. More regular attendance was viewed as another benefit, which in turn improves learning outcomes. Teachers also considered students have better attention spans and fewer behavioural problems. Because they can see results, teachers are very enthusiastic about continuing to develop school approaches to health and wellbeing.

In view of the many benefits, staff at PES consider it important to keep the idea of FiS going should the funding stop. Staff are working to further integrate the promotion of health and wellbeing into the school culture and hope that, by doing so, it will not only become an ingrained part of everyday practice, but students will adopt healthy habits through choice and continue to do so once they move on to a new school. To further integrate the FiS and HPS ethos into the school culture it has been suggested that the lead teacher is changed on a regular basis. Staff consider this will further enhance whole-school buy-in as it could enable more people to gain a sense of ownership so that it is “not just the health teacher” driving the initiative. The orchard that PES has planted will also contribute to sustaining the FiS vision.

7. School and community commitment to wellbeing at Whakamaru School

7.1 Introducing Whakamaru School

Whakamaru School is a decile 3 full primary school located in the Waikato region. The school serves a supportive farming and rural/semiurban community. The school has a roll of approximately 83 students. Almost two-thirds identify as Māori, one-third as New Zealand European and the remaining students as a range of nationalities. Whakamaru School is a Phase 3 FiS school which has been using HPS approaches since joining the initiative in late 2006.

The school is surrounded by trees and its elevated setting offers views of nearby Whakamaru dam. This rural backdrop makes the school a peaceful and safe place for students and the Waikato region offers many opportunities for outdoor activities. Whakamaru School aims to provide “quality education in a caring environment” and health and wellbeing is important to the school, which is known in the region as a “fit school” due to student achievements in local sport events.

During our visit to the school we talked to the principal, the FiS lead teacher, a classroom teacher, three parents and five students from Years 7 and 8. These parents and students are members of the school’s HPS health team and work with the local FiSC, who was also consulted for this case study.

7.2 School-wide approaches to health and wellbeing

Leadership: Developing a critical mass of committed staff

When the school joined FiS in 2006, the principal took up the initiative with great enthusiasm. During 2008, the school had a series of leadership changes, which affected the momentum of initiatives, including FiS. As staff commented, when the principal left, their work connected to FiS “fell apart”. While the new FiS leader (a classroom teacher) tried to keep the momentum going, this proved difficult when the school was under different managers. Given this, changes are continuing at the school, but at a slower pace.

This experience alerted staff to the drawbacks of having one person taking responsibility for championing FiS. Learning from this, staff plan to opt for a more inclusive approach in 2009 by encouraging wider involvement from teachers, as well as parents and students. This will enable FiS goals to be realised even though people come and go. A new principal has been appointed and the school is now in the process of developing a new strategic plan and mission statement to guide

its future. School leaders noted that HPS and FiS goals will be acknowledged and incorporated into this planning with guidance from the local HPS and FiSC who play active roles at the school.

School approaches to health and wellbeing

Whakamaru School's approach to health and wellbeing is based on the concept of hauora. This holistic approach is supported by staff, students and the Board of Trustees, and prioritises emotional and social wellbeing, as well as physical health.

Some school-wide approaches that align with FiS goals were already part of Whakamaru School practice prior to joining the initiative. These include: free dental care, offered in collaboration with the local DHB; support from a local PHN and school social worker; a number of sunsmart policies and procedures; and the prioritisation of physical activity.

When the school joined FiS, a set of guidelines for each of the four FiS health areas were developed and implemented. These guidelines were drawn up by the then acting principal in consultation with students and parents. They state that part of the school vision is to "actively promote health and wellbeing". These guidelines have played an important role in embedding FiS approaches within the school culture and are discussed in more detail later in this case study.

Locating FiS within the curriculum

Because the Health and PE curriculum has always had a high priority at Whakamaru School, FiS is adding to prior embedded practices. Past school practice often involved exploring nutrition as a separate theme; for example, during a health and nutrition week. In 2008, an "All about me" health unit was taught during one term. In this unit, students discussed the effects of food intake, what enables them to run around faster this year than last, why they do certain sports at the school and how, and why, they grow in height.

To support staff to implement the new curriculum, Whakamaru School has recently adopted a more integrated approach to subject content. In the future, the school plans to have a school-wide, year-long theme. Staff considered this will make it easier for them to incorporate a focus on nutrition into their programmes and will assist them to promote health and wellbeing as a "normal part of everyday life" for both students and teachers, turning ideas and practices into habits:

Children are really motivated and more needs to be happening in the classroom. There is this assumption that they understand, but we need to keep excitement going by giving them new things to do all the time. (School leader)

In 2009, the school-wide theme is going to be "My place, my environment" which will support students to gain a deeper understanding of their surroundings and the history of the region. Staff plan to connect this theme to some of the FiS health areas by encouraging students to explore the physical aspects of their environment.

Student leadership

It is important for Whakamaru School that students are involved in instigating health and wellbeing initiatives and that they take part in any decision making surrounding policies and changes that affect them. The school has a health team consisting of students, parents and whānau and school staff (the principal, teachers and support staff). While the health team used to only have senior students involved, membership has been expanded to include juniors who are “really enthusiastic and coming up with great ideas” about driving health-related activities at the school. Staff considered that having a mix of stakeholders involved, instead of having a student-only health team, ensures that students have adult support, and gives representatives from the whole school community the opportunity to voice their opinions.

The local FiSC works closely with the health team, and in 2008 she assisted students to prepare a PowerPoint presentation to raise awareness amongst students and staff about the purpose of the health team, what being a HPS incorporates and “what being healthy actually means”. Students from the health team also participated in a FiS student leadership hui, along with representatives from over 150 schools around the region.

At the end of 2008, the health team developed a “wish list” for 2009. This identified a desire amongst members to adopt a needs-based approach, stronger focus on nutrition and sunsmart and to work on different health areas simultaneously; for example, incorporating healthy eating options, a fun run and raising awareness of FiS and HPS during a Sunsmart day.

Being part of the health team offers students opportunities to develop leadership, co-operation and communication skills while they learn about health and wellbeing issues. The school also offers other opportunities for students to take on a more active role through positions such as house leaders and fruit monitors.

7.3 Connections with health promoters and FiS clusters

The principal and the lead teacher attend FiS and HPS hui which they find very inspiring. These gatherings are giving them a much broader view of “what health and wellbeing can incorporate”. Also useful is the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with other schools. These ideas and contacts have been used to develop some of the initiatives mentioned below.

The strong relationship the local FiSC has built with the school is also valued by school leaders and health team members. The FiSC is in regular contact with the health team, does presentations in assembly and has presented about FiS and HPS to the Board of Trustees. Students commented on her ability to make health and wellbeing talk “easy to understand” enabling them to “translate” the messages to juniors. They particularly enjoyed working with the FiSC on the PowerPoint presentation.

An emphasis on making links with local schools and the community to support their initiatives is also part of Whakamaru School culture. Staff work closely with other schools in the area when

organising regional sport events, make use of the resources the local community has to offer and, if needed, look to local businesses for sponsorship.

7.4 Changes to health priority areas at Whakamaru School

FiS has supported Whakamaru School to do an overall upgrade of policies and practices surrounding student health and wellbeing. Since joining the initiative, the main FiS health areas the school has focused on are healthy eating and sunsmart. However, the school has been working towards making changes across different aspects of school practices in regard to the other FiS priority areas, as outlined in their guidelines. School approaches to the four FiS health areas, as well as other recent changes connected to health and wellbeing, are described below.

Healthy eating

On joining FiS, healthy eating was the first priority area on which the school focused. The acting principal at that time worked very hard to improve student and staff practices in relation to the food eaten at school. Healthy Eating guidelines were developed in collaboration with the health team. These guidelines signalled some major changes to school culture. For example, the school became a “water-only” school, and water filters in classrooms were provided to encourage students to drink water instead of fizzy drinks and juices.

“Read and Fruit”—the supervised eating of fruit in combination with reading—is now an established part of the day for students who do this every day for 10 minutes of their first break. The first 10 minutes of lunch breaks are dedicated to having lunch in the shade, also with supervision from teachers who act as role models by bringing healthy lunches. In addition, the guidelines cover areas such as offering food treats only on special occasions, prioritising healthy fundraisers and ensuring that food sold at any school event is healthy. To provide a further support for the guidelines by ensuring students have less opportunity to buy unhealthy snacks, school bus pick-up points have been relocated away from local shops.

In collaboration with their FiSC, the school has also developed a Nutrition Action Plan. This includes actions that address each of the three core building blocks of HPS: Community links and partnerships; Curriculum, teaching and learning; and School organisation and ethos. The plan clearly states how the school community can achieve nutritional awareness and healthier eating habits by linking activities within these three areas. The objectives of the Nutrition Action Plan related to curriculum practice show that current priorities are for students to learn about food groups, good nutrition, how to grow and cook healthy foods and food rituals and practices and healthy meals from a Māori and Pacific perspective.

Because of the changes the school has recently been through, some aspects of the Nutrition Action Plan which relate to the teaching of nutrition have yet to be fully implemented, and some previously trialled healthy eating initiatives have been put on hold, including healthy lunches on Fridays (such as winter soups), and a student Garden Club. With a new principal in place, an

enthusiastic health team, and as the school develops its new strategic plan and teachers adopt the new curriculum, staff considered that a focus on health and wellbeing is likely to become a more ingrained part of everyday teaching, and the “on hold” initiatives are likely to be re-implemented.

Having realised that not many of their peers eat breakfast, this is the current focus for students on the health team. They talk to their peers about the importance of breakfast, and try to informally bring this topic into conversation, in particular with juniors. Family members on the health team noted they would like to make it easier for parents and whānau to provide children with healthy lunch options. They are considering collecting recipes for a recipe book, and holding a cooking demonstration event. The school is considering applying for HEHA funding for kitchen facilities that can be used to prepare healthy lunches and for classroom activities.

Overall, staff suggested that recent changes to school culture, policies and practices are increasing students’ awareness about healthy eating, and lunches are now healthier. Prior to joining FiS, it was not unusual for children to bring fish and chips or pies for lunch, and many did not eat fruit, either because they did not like it or because it was not provided, but “now they love it”. Teachers reported that children take real pride in their healthy lunches, and like to show others what they’ve brought for the day. Staff’s perceptions of change were supported by the Healthy Futures student survey data which show that, since joining FiS, the number of students who reported eating both fruit and vegetables has increased, and the number reporting eating unhealthy options has decreased. Students also displayed a high level of knowledge about healthy eating practices.

Physical activity

Regular physical activity has always been an ingrained part of the culture at Whakamaru School. Regular fitness activities and involvement in regional sporting events such as cross-country and athletics reflect a school-wide emphasis on physical wellbeing. Because the school is already very active, there have not been many recent changes in this area. However, the school has a number of initiatives that support students to keep active and make connections with the wider community, thereby addressing this FiS area. These include regional sporting events that take place each term in collaboration with other schools in the area. Teachers take students out for PE or fitness every day and these sessions are often influenced by the type of event coming up; for example, softball or athletics. Parents and whānau support students at these events, and assist with kapa haka.

The school has a swimming pool which is used regularly over the summer period. During breaks, children have the opportunity to play in the adventure playground, or participate in sport activities such as rugby or soccer. The school also has a policy of allowing students to climb trees and build huts as they want to “bring back the fun” in physical activity.

Prior to the case study visit, all senior students attended an Education Outside the Classroom week during which they hiked up a mountain and tried kayaking. The school accessed the kayaks and an instructor from a community agency in nearby Mangakino.

The health team has also been involved in physical activity events. In 2008 they assisted in organising a Dancing with the Stars fundraiser which had an associated classroom focus. Students' comments show how this event was woven into the classroom programme:

Instead of a disco we had a big dancing thing ... it was quite active because we had to learn dances and practise every day. (Student)

Sunsmart

Being sunsmart is another practice that, prior to FiS, was fairly well embedded in Whakamaru School's everyday practice. Even so, being part of FiS has encouraged the school to revise and improve policies and practices. Students are required to wear sunhats in Terms 1 and 4 and encouraged to wear sunscreen and play in the shade. Teachers act as role models to keep momentum going: "If we don't wear hats we can't expect the kids to." Trees, covered outdoor areas and a swimming pool cover provide shade for students on school grounds. In addition, the school sunsafe guidelines suggest that teachers incorporate a focus on sunsafe education into classroom practice.

As noted above, sunsmart is an area that the health team would like to give more emphasis to in 2009. Sunsmart became high on the agenda as teachers and students were made aware (through FiS/HPS hui) of other schools designing their own hats. The health team is now in the process of seeking sponsorship from a local business to enable them to provide hats for all students. The FiSC has recently linked the school with a CS representative and they are in the process of discussing procedures for gaining sunsmart accreditation, which the school hopes to accomplish in the near future.

These school policies and practices appear to be supporting change. The Healthy Futures student survey data show that, since joining FiS, the number of students who reported wearing sunhats at school and at home "most of the time" has increased, and the number who reported they regularly got sunburnt has decreased to zero. Students also displayed a high level of knowledge about sunsmart practices.

Smokefree

Whakamaru is a smokefree school and none of its teachers smoke. The school smokefree guidelines note that, if visitors wish to do so, they have to leave the school premises. The smokefree area of FiS is not covered by teachers in the classroom, but by external providers such as Life Education and the local PHN.

Environmental projects connected to FiS

Since joining FiS, Whakamaru School has developed plans for a number of environmental activities that are associated with FiS. One is the school Garden Club which was initiated by a previous principal. Other plans include a wrapper-free day, and encouraging the use of

biodegradable wrappers, which can be linked with the school's healthy lunch focus. The school has recently signed up to enviroschools. Staff consider this will lead to further development of the above activities.

The decision to allow students to climb trees and build huts was based on the idea that "if students know their environment they are more likely to respect it". The 2009 whole-year theme (My place my environment) will offer further opportunities for staff to increase the focus on environmental projects and connect these with health and wellbeing.

Emotional and social wellbeing

Whakamaru School accesses a number of external providers in order to provide resources and classroom programmes that support students' social and emotional wellbeing. Staff are becoming increasingly aware of the connection between this aspect of health and wellbeing and FiS:

FiS is not just about eating fruit ... it's so much bigger and involves mental wellbeing as well. (Teacher)

An emphasis on self-esteem, co-operation and respect is part of the classroom programme. To support this, the school works with the Life Education Trust whose educators deliver modules that also cover content connected to the FiS health priority areas. The school also takes part in Kia Kaha. This programme is facilitated by local police educators, and aims to raise awareness about, and prevent, bullying.

7.5 Student perspectives

During our visit to Whakamaru School we talked to five students from Years 7 and 8, all of whom are members of the health team. These students believed that it is important for children to know about the four FiS health areas as "it stops them making the mistakes that those who aren't educated made". The students demonstrated a high level of understanding about healthy practices in the four FiS areas which they attributed to a close working relationship with the local FiSC, being part of the health team, classroom learning, as well as messages from the media and their whānau. They acknowledged the wide scope of what being healthy constitutes by recognising that spiritual and social issues can affect overall wellbeing and that "you don't have to be all strong and have muscles to be healthy".

All students took proud ownership of the policy changes that have taken place at the school as a result of FiS and HPS involvement. They explained how members of the health team had worked together to come up with ideas for possible changes, and how they enjoyed working with adults on these plans. In addition to gaining knowledge about health and wellbeing, taking part in the health team was supporting them to gain leadership skills, knowledge about how to "communicate with the whole community" and ways of dealing with peer pressure.

Healthy eating was an area in which many changes had taken place for students, both at school and at home. As a consequence of the FiS fruit, and the changes the school has made, students noted they now bring healthier lunches, eat more fruit (as one noted: “when I get home after school, I just crave apples”), drink more milk and water while consuming much less cordial, juice and fizzy drinks, eat a “balanced diet of meat and veg” and eat breakfast on a regular basis.

Students were very passionate about their school being one that supports the physical activity aspect of FiS. They described Whakamaru School as “really competitive” and explained that classes often “challenge each other” in different sports. Teachers also take them out for a five-minute run during class so that the students can “gain back focus”. “Littlies”, they explain, run around the playground, build huts and climb trees (for which everyone has had to learn safety rules). Some also participate in the Pacific group, and do kapa haka.

In addition to being active in school, some students now watch less TV when they get home, “get on the trampoline”, go for regular runs or do some extra physical activity when they’ve had a food treat “to balance it out”. Others have become more serious about their chosen sport; for example, doing rep training for netball. The children described how Whakamaru village has a “whole-community” focus on sport, particularly during summer when they can join Friday activities such as “learn to play touch” and “summer soccer”. Overall, it seems that Whakamaru School and the wider community naturally support FiS physical activity goals because these are already embedded in local culture.

Students’ discussions about sunsmart practices reflect that their school has a “no hat, no play” policy, which they took part in implementing. In school they learnt about UV rays and the “slip, slop, slap” initiative. This “makes you more wary ... you know what can happen if you don’t do it [wear hat or use sunscreen]”. Students also reported they learnt about staying safe from the sun outside of school. Parents and TV ad campaigns were influences for all. One had learnt from the “personal experience” of a family member with melanoma. Students also noted that when this area is covered in class, it is often too brief and they don’t learn much. They would like to learn more about the range of consequences of sunburn.

The fourth area of FiS, smokefree, is one that students had very strong opinions about. They noted that, at school, it was external providers such as Life Education and Harold the giraffe, as well as the local PHN, who taught them most about this area. These people showed them what smoking (and alcohol) can do to you:

It’s amazing what cigarettes are made up of ... so many poisonous things. All that tar, you might as well go and pick it off the road and eat it!

Students suggested that smoking has potential to “rot your teeth” and “turn your hair grey” and they were all dedicated to never becoming a smoker. They said they “egged” some teachers to quit when the school’s nonsmoking guidelines were implemented (in 2006), and have also inspired family members to stop. Smoking, they explained, used to be a bit of a problem at the

school as older kids who smoked would take juniors to the back of the school so they could try smoking. This has now stopped as the older students have moved on to other schools.

7.6 Connecting with parents and whānau

During our visit to Whakamaru School we talked to three parents who are involved in the health team. These parents were very positive about FiS and felt it was important that families took an active role in supporting students in regards to school approaches to health and wellbeing. They had all noticed changes in their children's behaviour since the school joined FiS, including that children don't ask for cordial or lollies any more, fruit and sandwiches are eaten at lunch (these used to be left in lunchboxes) and children are more interested in cooking at home.

These parents described a number of mechanisms the school has for connecting with the parent community which are linked to FiS goals. In addition to the health team, parents are invited to take part in a group called Friends of the School which is responsible for fundraisers. This group is encouraged to follow FiS guidelines about healthy fundraising activities. A newsletter goes out to parents on a regular basis and the health team contributes with content, such as tips on what to put in lunch boxes. This newsletter has recently been "revamped" and the health team hopes this will encourage further interest in the school community.

In 2008, community consultation was carried out (as part of HPS processes) and the results from this will help guide the new FiS action plan, which is currently being developed by the FiSC in collaboration with the health team.

At present (due to leadership changes) there are no specific methods by which Whakamaru School connects with its Māori parent community. However, it was noted that "there is a great need for this" and these connections are a future focus for school leaders. It was also recognised that, as part of the continued development of HPS processes for community involvement, consultation in general is likely to play a larger role at the school.

7.7 Challenges

The main challenge for Whakamaru School, in regards to FiS, has been the leadership changes mentioned above. Because those in leadership positions have different priorities, and may not have FiS-related activities high on the "to do list", it has at times been difficult to keep the momentum going. The school has also experienced some issues in creating partnerships with some of the agencies involved in FiS. The school's geographical location, which places them "in between regions", has caused some confusion about which RST they should access. The FiSC is aware of this, and a priority for 2009 is to make sure school staff are connected with the right people so they can access resources.

7.8 Sustainability and where to next

Staff at Whakamaru School viewed FiS as a useful complement to their existing focus on encouraging students to lead healthy and physically active lives. With a prior commitment to student health and wellbeing, they considered many aspects of FiS, such as a focus on physical activity and sunsmart, to already be “intrinsic parts of the school” culture. Given this, on joining FiS in 2006, the initial guidelines and activities the school community developed around the four FiS health areas have clearly enhanced school practices. Staff noted that the support, ideas and contacts gained from their FiSC and FiS hui give them the tools and processes they need to build on existing approaches. These connections also assist them to develop new priorities. One example is the focus on healthy eating which has, over the last two years, created a higher level of awareness about healthy eating practices amongst students and staff:

The students are more knowledgeable ... a lot more of them understand the benefits.
(Teacher)

[Students] know more about the 5+aDay mentality and it's starting to come in at home as well. (Teacher)

Staff noted that a focus on health and wellbeing is likely to become further embedded in school practices as they develop a new strategic plan, and a specific FiS action plan. As part of this process there are plans to revise and build on the initial guidelines. For the purpose of sustaining healthy eating practices, the school recognises the benefits of getting the school garden up and running and building kitchen facilities on site so lunches can be provided.

Being part of FiS is resulting in a variety of changes at the school, from which staff, students and parents and whānau are already seeing wider benefits. There is strong commitment from all to continue developing approaches that align with FiS. They believe the initiative has further potential to enhance school practice, as well as to influence the wider school community, as, when students are given new experiences which change their thinking, practices can filter through to the home environment.

8. Building healthy foundations for learning at Te Mahoe School

8.1 Introducing Te Mahoe School

Te Mahoe School is a decile 1a primary school located in a rural village near Whakatane. The school serves a highly mobile community, and has a roll of about 50 students of whom all but one identify as Māori. Most students affiliate to Ngāti Awa and Ngāi Tuhoe. The school has three teachers and two teaching assistants, some of whom are students' whānau. The school started Phase 3 of FiS in Term 4 of 2006. During our visit to the school we talked to the principal, a teaching assistant who looks after the healthy lunch programme and supports the student health team, a classroom teacher and two students. We also talked to the local FiSC.

8.2 Building on an existing healthy eating focus

For several years prior to FiS, the staff at Te Mahoe School have been working on improving school-wide approaches to healthy eating. Around 2005, the principal started to notice that students were eating a lot of sugar and high-fat food, and some students were bringing packets of fruit juice sugar crystals to school for lunch. Staff considered students' diets were impacting on their ability to learn. The principal discussed these concerns with the Board of Trustees, and gradually started to implement changes. When the opportunity to join FiS was offered, staff decided to "take the bull by the horns", as they immediately saw how FiS could strengthen their existing directions. They held a series of meetings about how the resources and support offered through FiS could enhance their approaches to health and wellbeing. Staff considered it important that they raised their awareness about healthy eating before they started promoting messages to students and whānau, so a teacher and teaching assistant attended a local healthy eating expo. Since then the focus has mostly been on raising awareness about being a healthy school and the benefits of good nutrition, and building on the school's existing healthy eating initiatives.

Sharing leadership amongst all staff

Because of the small size of Te Mahoe School, all staff are involved in activities relating to the school's focus on health. Over 2006–8 the overall approach was led by the principal and a FiS lead teacher with support from other staff. This lead teacher has since left the school, and this role is now being shared between teaching assistants (one of whom is also a whānau member) and a teacher. These staff members attend FiS hui and support the student health team. The principal

leads school approaches to physical activity. A healthy food breakfast, break-time and canteen programme is run by one of the teaching assistants.

Developing student leaders

Te Mahoe School has a large health team which consists of students from different year levels. The team was first set up in 2007. In 2008, staff observed students “came back buzzing” from the local FiS student leadership hui and were keen to progress ideas at the school. Since then the team has been raising awareness at the school about HPS. With support from staff and a FiSC, these students visited each class to discuss the idea that “the whole school is going to be healthy” and about Feeding our Futures.⁸ They worked with the lead teacher, teaching assistants and the local FiSC to develop a PowerPoint presentation to showcase to the community the great things the school was already doing around healthy eating. The team decorated the school hall with healthy eating posters, and the students shared their PowerPoint with their peers at a lunchtime screening. Students also presented their slideshow at a whānau hui. As well as the health team, the school has a student council. These students manage their peers’ access to PE equipment. School staff and the FiSC noted that being part of these teams is motivating for students and is increasing their self-confidence as well as giving them a range of life skills.

8.3 Making links between the curriculum and school-wide health focuses

At Te Mahoe School the health curriculum is given a similar priority to other learning areas. The school has a long-term health curriculum plan, and each term has at least one health focus. In 2007, to coincide with joining FiS, the health plan was revised, and the school had a year-long theme on “Healthy brains”. In 2008, to build on this theme, teachers did units on the types of food and behaviours that are needed to sleep well. In 2009, the health theme for the first term is “Kia Maanu—Kia Ora: Staying afloat, staying alive”. This theme builds on previous work about healthy bodies and minds, and also includes a focus on beach safety and sunsmart behaviours. In general, staff look for opportunities to build on prior themes, and weave a focus on healthy eating, physical activity, and sunsmart into curriculum activities.

Over 2007–8 the school also redeveloped the PE plan so that it now has stronger links to school sports and other events, and included a greater emphasis on daily fitness for students.

⁸ <http://www.feedingourfutures.org.nz/>

8.4 Changes to school approaches to health

Over the last two years, Te Mahoe School has continued to build their healthy eating programme and enhanced their approaches to the other three health areas that are part of FiS. Activities that are connected to the four FiS health areas are described below.

Healthy eating

As noted above, for a number of years Te Mahoe School has been working on promoting healthy eating. Prior to FiS, the school adopted a “no sugar and fizzy drinks” rule and whānau were encouraged not to give students these foods for lunch. Then staff looked at the pies and sausage rolls students were able to buy from the school canteen, and changed to pies with healthy heart ticks. The canteen is important to the school as many students buy lunch at school, and all the profits are used to fund school trips and experiences.

When they joined FiS, staff decided to use the free fruit as an additional vehicle to strengthen their school food practices and to speed up the changes they were making to the canteen food. One key change was swapping providers. Now, the school no longer has pies on the menu. Instead, a list of healthy options was developed and students on the health team tried samples. All students were surveyed about which options they liked.

Awareness raising about healthy eating is also a priority. The FiS fruit is promoted and each class group has a breaktime during which they eat fruit in the shade. If they are hungry, students are also able to help themselves to fruit in the morning or at lunchtime.

School staff are not keen on policies unless they are “lived”, and instead have put their energy into developing a set of commonly shared principles and rules about “what’s good food and what’s not”. These principles include ideas about the sorts of foods that are “treat” or “everyday” food, and that sugar, fizzy drinks, sweets and high-fat foods do not help students to learn. Staff keep an eye on students’ lunch boxes and praise them for bringing healthy options. Students are encouraged to eat their healthy food first, and staff replace unhealthy options with fruit and milk. Staff also discuss healthy eating with the whānau of one or two students for whom they have particular concerns. Teachers also “walk the talk” by eating fruit with students and give pencils for rewards rather than food treats.

To coincide with the changes to the canteen menu and the arrival of the FiS fruit, as part of the related curriculum theme, “Healthy brains”, students did a number of activities in class. They learnt about 5+aDay and the health benefits of drinking water and red and green coloured vegetables. Teachers also made links to traditional Māori healthy food practices such as gathering kaimoana. Since then, health topics are designed to build on this theme, and when Life Education visits, modules are selected which relate to the school’s focus. In 2008, a teacher noticed that students did not really connect with the idea of a food pyramid, and so worked with students to

develop a healthy eating tree. This tree was sustained by Papatuanuku and included healthy kai at the base and in the trunk.

The school also has regular healthy cooking sessions, and in 2008 held a healthy cooking week sponsored by PAK'nSAVE. Each day students made food such as soup and fruit smoothies. Whānau who work in local market gardens also donate vegetables which are cooked at school.

In 2008, the health team entered a healthy food competition run by the canteen provider, Future Foods. Although the application only required teachers to fill in a form, to ensure students were involved, the team developed a scrapbook about the school's healthy eating focus and also sent a copy of their PowerPoint with the application. There were approximately 90 entries into the competition and Te Mahoe was one of eight schools that received a highly commended certificate.

In 2009 the school was offered sponsorship by Fonterra for a breakfast club, and now receives weekly supplies of weetbix and fortified milk. Students who have not had breakfast are able to help themselves to this or FiS fruit. Leftover milk is given to the junior class on one day a week and a senior class on another day. School staff noted this is a very valuable addition to their healthy eating programme, as they can see how popular the milk is with students.

Staff noted they expected some resistance to some of the changes described above, and initially a few whānau were not supportive of the school's rules about sugary foods. The principal considers it is important to tread slowly, and regular messages about the learning benefits of good nutrition are shared with whānau. Over time the community has come on board. The staff and students with whom we talked considered the free fruit and school food programme to be highly successful, and practices in their community to be changing as a result. Students are displaying more knowledge about good nutrition and self-select healthy options. The number of students bringing high-sugar drinks to school is now very small and whānau are sending healthier food in lunch boxes. Staff considered that a new local HEHA healthy marae pilot would be likely to reinforce healthy eating messages within the wider community.

As a result of all these activities the principal observed the school didn't have to make any changes for the new healthy eating NAG 5. He was disappointed when clause 3 of this NAG was removed, as he felt this clause sent an important message to the community which supported the changes the school was trying to achieve. Plans for 2009 include new priorities for the student health team, continuing the healthy eating focus and looking for ways to expand activities.

Physical activity

Prior to FiS, Te Mahoe School had a tradition of prioritising physical activity. As part of the healthy school focus, over 2007–8 the school-wide PE plan was revised and daily fitness was introduced. After morning karakia, junior students do a fitness session and seniors usually do a similar session later in the day based around activities such as skipping, ball handling skills and obstacle courses. In summer, students also have daily swimming sessions in the school pool. Following several years of planning, tiger turf has just been installed to provide an outdoor

surface that can be used by students in all seasons and in winter students also do fitness to music, dance, kapa haka and rāukau (stick) games in the hall. The PE and fitness programme is linked to curriculum themes, common winter and summer sports played by students and upcoming events. For example, during an Olympics theme in 2008, students trained for team activities, and in 2009 students are practising their touch skills.

Staff work closely with other schools in the area to organise regional sport events. Students are encouraged to play inter-school sports, and are provided with extra training. Recently the school sent a large team to the local swimming sports. Biking is also popular with students, and the school takes part in Bikewise Week.

Another focus is to expose students to a range of different types of physical activity. For a recent sea week the school held a beach education day during which student tried beach games, kayaking and boating. Reps from the local Bay of Plenty RST also visit and run sessions with each class to introduce students to new equipment. Following a session on mini-golf, staff took some students to the Te Teko golf course, an outing that was enjoyed by all. Students on the health team also try out a wide range of physical activities at FiS student leadership hui. Jump Rope for Heart is run every second year and students make good use of skipping ropes at breaktimes. Local businesses have also donated equipment to the school.

Student-led activities are encouraged and, capitalising on students' interest in dancing, a teacher supported a class to choreograph a dance. This was performed for other students at assembly. The library also purchases hunting and fishing magazines to link in with students' outdoor interests.

Overall, staff reported that students are very active. In keeping with these views, we noticed that at break and lunchtime, students were making good use of the tiger turf and equipment such as skipping ropes, balls and hula hoops. Future plans include continuing to build on current activities and making more connections to local events and groups. The principal is considering approaching local surfers to give students the opportunity to find out about surfing, and is looking for someone to mentor the kapa haka group, as the teacher who did so recently left the school.

Sunsmart

Being a healthy school is also encouraging staff to promote sunsmart behaviours. Over the past few years, local businesses have provided sunhats. These hats are named and left at school. There is sunscreen available for school trips, and the school has a “no hat, no play” rule. The school buildings all have verandas, and students are encouraged to eat their fruit and lunch in the shade. Staff model the wearing of sunhats during fruit eating time and discuss their personal experiences of the impact of sunburn with students. Sunsmart practices such as “slip, slop, slap” are covered in the classroom, especially before activities such as beach days and swimming sports. In terms of future projects, the school is working towards getting shades over the pool. Finances are a concern, with teachers commenting that the school needs more money for hats for new students.

Smokefree

Te Mahoe School has a smokefree policy which staff noted is always respected. Although many whānau and some staff smoke, they are very careful to only do so when they are well away from the school. In 2008, to show their commitment to the school's health focus, the Board of Trustees paid for a teacher to attend cessation sessions run at the local public health unit. This included patches to support her to quit smoking. The plan was that, once she had quit, she would become a smokefree co-ordinator for whānau. Staff noted that this model was a good idea, but the teacher was finding it difficult to quit and therefore they do not yet have a co-ordinator.

A focus on smokefree behaviours is included in the classroom programme. Staff considered this was important for older students given the prevalence of smoking and dope plantations in the local community. During healthy brain and lifestyle units, teachers discuss how smoking affects your body and health. The school has regular visits from external providers such as Life Education and police educators who run the DARE programmes. These providers cover smokefree behaviours as well as the impacts of legal and illegal drugs.

Emotional and social wellbeing

Staff at Te Mahoe School aim to support students to become self-managing individuals who have a sense of connection to each other and their wider community. One way this is achieved is through a set of common values which are promoted across the school. Respect is an important value, as is caring for others. Senior students are encouraged to be role models and the school emphasises tuakana-teina relationships, and buddies. The student health team includes students of different ages and these students support each other as they work together.

One emphasis at the school, that connects with FiS, is on celebrating students' successes. The school has "Caught being good" and "Student of the week" awards. Staff and students are able to give students a card if they are "caught being good" for things such as their classroom learning, showing respect for others or for their healthy practices. Nominations are read out in assembly and rewarded with a pencil or a Duffy book. Students also share their successes with the whole school at assembly. This management of the "Caught being good" awards is in the process of being taken over by students from the health team.

Another focus is supporting students to enhance their conflict resolution skills. All students are taught how to use the WITS framework.⁹ At lunchtime, senior students wear special hats that identify them as monitors. The monitors encourage their peers to use their WITS to self-manage their interactions. In classtime students are also encouraged to self-monitor, and space is set aside for them to take time out. The school also makes use of external providers to support their focus on emotional and social wellbeing. Recently a theatre group sponsored by TrustPower visited and

⁹ The aim of the WITS framework is to increase children's conflict resolution skills by giving them, and the adults around them, a common language and strategies to deal with situations such as bullying or peer pressure. The WITS acronym commonly used in New Zealand schools is "Walk away", "Ignore", "Tell an adult" and "Say an 'I' statement".

performed “You’ve got the power”. Staff noted students enjoyed this, and commented on the match between school values, such as respect and acceptance, and those promoted by the troupe.

Staff noted the students have always had a strong sense of whānau, but are also noticing an improvement in school culture that they attribute to their combined focus on self-management, caring for others, good nutrition and physical activity. Staff commented that students are a lot calmer and on task in the classroom, and that major disagreements in the playground are rare.

8.5 Building connections with health promoters and local businesses

To support the initiatives described above, Te Mahoe School makes connections with a number of local health promoters and agencies. An emphasis on taking advantage of support from local businesses is also a feature of the school. The school’s healthy food and breakfast programmes, sunhats and sports equipment are all sponsored by local businesses.

Staff placed a high value on their connections with local FiSCs who assist them with information, and support their activities and the student health team. They also gain valuable ideas or support from FiS cluster meetings and student hui. Recently the FiSC assisted the school to make connections with the local HEHA co-ordinator so the school can do a nutrition assessment. The local public health unit is also planning to refocus the FiS cluster days to give local schools further opportunities to meet together and share ideas.

The school is also networked with other health providers. Twice a term, a student welfare meeting is attended by staff, a RTLB and a PHN. Students’ academic, physical and emotional health and wellbeing is discussed, and the team decides which person is best placed to address any concerns. School staff also provide a number of learning support programmes for students.

8.6 Student perspectives

During our visit to Te Mahoe School we interviewed two students. They talked enthusiastically about their school’s focus on healthy food and fitness. These students valued the leadership opportunities given to students—they were proud of the scrapbook and PowerPoint the health team had developed and students’ roles as PE and playground monitors. They were also keen to continue leading activities. In terms of their knowledge about healthy lifestyles, students noted that their main sources of information came from the health team and school staff, as well as external educators from Life Education and DARE. The media and family seemed to be less of an influence compared to other schools. The students had a good awareness of the principles and rules their school promotes, and were also able to describe some related changes they had made.

When talking about school food practices, students described how they had healthy food to eat at school such as fruit and milk. Students commented that their peers think the school fruit is

“yummy and they want another one!”, and it is influencing them to change their home eating patterns:

When I get home I have an apple or banana ... I used to have kai like yogurt, chicken and chips, KFC, sausage rolls, burgers, patties ...

These students displayed a good knowledge of the school healthy eating rules, noting that it is ok to sometimes have treats, but in general students are:

... not allowed to have fizzy, orange chips—like twisties ... and all the stuff that has sugar in it like chocolate ... ‘cause it’s not healthy for your body.

They considered a number of things are helping to improve their knowledge about healthy eating. These include visits from the health team to classes and the scrapbook and PowerPoint the health team developed, the posters around the school, cooking healthy food and learning about healthy food during Life Education.

Students talked about how their peers are very active and have many opportunities to do active things at school. They and many others are involved in sports teams and have opportunities to learn and practise the skills they need for these teams and inter-school sports. The school gives them the chance to try activities such as touch, netball, soccer, rugby, athletics, kayaking, swimming, kapa haka and inter-school sports. Juniors do daily fitness after karakia, and if it is wet they do fitness in the hall to music. Students described how the teacher initially showed them some moves to music; now kids invent new moves.

They also reported that most students are active before and after school and at breaktimes. Students noted “we’re the ones that organise the equipment” and that kids like using the PE equipment and the tiger turf to play games with double-dutch skipping being very popular. After school, many students play on the school grounds or in a local park. Students also reported being active in weekends with activities such as bullrush, bike riding and swimming in the local pool, dam and river.

Students described how they really enjoyed new activities and had a lot of fun on a recent school beach day trying out kayaking, fishing and making sandcastles. They also noted that the students who attended a FiS student leadership day loved trying out lots of different sports like archery and rock climbing. They were keen to go to these sessions and meet students from other schools.

In regard to sunsmart practices, students reported that their teachers encouraged them to bring sunglasses if they had them, and to “always wear your hats and eat your fruit in the shade”, but a number of students did not bother to wear their hats.

Students knew their school is smokefree and stated “you can’t bring smokes to school” as “smokes are harmful for little kids”. They reported gaining a lot of information about the harmful effects of smoking and legal and illegal drugs from Life Education and DARE educators. They were particularly interested in the amount of tar that went into lungs and how it discoloured fingers and affected your health. Students considered this information would stop them from

smoking when they are teenagers as it was helping them to see the impact of smoking. They described how many of their whānau and local college students smoked, and they also saw police and helicopters looking for dope plantations.

8.7 Connecting with family and the wider community

Staff reported that the school usually has a good number of whānau attending sports events, and activities that involve student performances or awards. In 2008 the school held a very successful healthy eating hui, which about 50 whānau attended. This hui focused on recent changes to school approaches around healthy eating and PE, and was combined with Duffy Book and Future Foods award ceremonies. Students from the health team showed their PowerPoint at the hui.

Whānau also support the healthy eating focus by providing healthy kai for students. At the recent beach education day whānau collected pipi for students, and whānau who work at local market gardens often drop extra kai such as watermelons, kiwifruit, corn or asparagus at school.

The Board of Trustees supports the school's focus on health and wellbeing by funding projects such as the tiger turf and a teacher's smoking cessation course. The school also makes use of the resources the local community has to offer. For example, a local farmer offered to plant one of the school fields in maize and has donated a plot of land near the village for a community garden. A large number of whānau assisted in planting the maize, and when these crops are ready, the community will harvest them together. Fruit scraps are given to another farmer for his pigs.

In 2008, students designed some colourful items to promote health and wellbeing for the school newsletter. The principal also uses the newsletter to share health messages. One priority for the principal and FiSC is finding creative ways to increase the number of whānau who are actively involved in the school and on the health team. Some whānau are teaching assistants, but the school sometimes finds it hard to connect with whānau beyond the activities described above.

8.8 Sustainability and where to next

Staff and students at Te Mahoe School value FiS for the way it has enhanced and strengthened the school's existing healthy eating focus. Being part of FiS has increased staff's awareness that some students did not have breakfast or food for lunch. A key benefit of the FiS fruit and the breakfast programme is that they now have more food to offer these students. Staff linked a reduction in school sores and positive changes in students' concentration, academic learning and behaviour to their healthy school focus: "We no longer have hypo kids ... I reckon the kids are a lot happier and there are less conflicts as they have full stomachs!" Staff commented that the way they linked curriculum units and the input from external providers to their current health focus was also increasing students' knowledge about healthy behaviours. The continuation of the free fruit was a concern for all with staff noting how much students enjoyed this. Sustaining the free fruit in its current form is considered too expensive. Resourcing for extra sunhats is also a concern.

Staff considered that, as all staff and students are involved, the promotion of healthy practices is now ingrained in the school culture. Looking to the future, staff and students are keen to carry on promoting health and wellbeing in their community, and they have a variety of plans. These include the continuation of current approaches, development of new health-related curriculum themes which build on prior learning, and a needs assessment and the development of new priorities for the school and the student health team.

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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
CS	<i>Cancer Society</i>
DHB	<i>District Health Board</i>
DP	<i>Deputy principal</i>
FiS	<i>Fruit in Schools</i>
FiSC	<i>Fruit in Schools Coordinator</i>
HEHA	<i>Healthy Eating–Healthy Action</i>
HOI	<i>Health Outcomes International</i>
HPS	<i>Health Promoting Schools</i>
MoH	<i>Ministry of Health</i>
NAG	<i>National Administration Guideline</i>
NHF	<i>National Heart Foundation</i>
NZCER	<i>New Zealand Council for Educational Research</i>
PAL	<i>Physical Activity Leader</i>
PD	<i>Professional development</i>
PE	<i>Physical education</i>
PHN	<i>Public Health Nurse</i>
RST	<i>Regional Sports Trust</i>
RTLB	<i>Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour</i>
SCPAP	<i>School–Community Physical Activity Project</i>
SPARC	<i>Sport and Recreation New Zealand</i>
SSS	<i>School Support Services</i>
SWIS	<i>Social Worker in School</i>
WAVE	<i>Wellbeing and Vitality in Education</i>

Appendix A: Interview schedules

Principal/lead teacher interview questions Fruit in Schools case study: 2008–2009 NZCER/HOI

Information about you

1. a) How long have you been in teaching or school leadership? _____ Years
- b) How long have you been at this school? _____ Years

School background (*background question for the principal only*)

2. Could you give me some background about this school and its community?
 - The school community and its strengths
 - Any challenges this school is facing
 - Current or recent professional development focuses

School approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing

3. Could you give me some background about this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?
 - What priority is given to hauora/health and wellbeing, and the health curriculum?
 - Do you focus on hauora/health and wellbeing as a whole school? (e.g. Do you *have school-wide themes, a focus on Health Promoting Schools or being a "healthy school"?*)
4. Since joining FiS, could you tell me about the different activities that have been started or strengthened at this school? E.g.
 - Have you made changes to policies, practices, or events linked to the 4 FiS areas (healthy eating, PA, sunsmart, smokefree)?
 - Have you focused on other health areas (e.g., emotional and social wellbeing or environmental projects like gardens)?
 - Do you have any current hauora/health and wellbeing priorities?
 - Have you further developed approaches to the Health and PE curriculum?
5. Who is involved in developing school approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?
 - Do you have a hauora/health team? Who is on it?
 - Are you working with other agencies on activities connected to the 4 FiS health areas or environmental projects? What changes have resulted from these partnerships? (e.g. with FiSC, Heart Foundation, Sports Trusts, Cancer Society)

Students' experiences

6. Could you tell me about the ways students are encouraged to take a lead in hauora/health and wellbeing activities?
7. Have you seen any changes in students' attitudes, knowledge, or behaviour that you think are to do with any of the changes we have just been talking about? Do you have any evidence to show this?

Connections with parents and whānau

8. What are the main ways this school consults and shares information about hauora/health and wellbeing with parents and whānau? Have any of these been particularly successful?
9. What are the different ways parents and whānau contribute their knowledge and skills to school hauora/health and wellbeing activities? (e.g. *members of a hauora/health team, contribute to classroom programmes or events, sports, or kapa haka?*)

Support and PD

10. Have you, or other staff, attended any PD connected to FiS and the 4 health areas? Was it useful?
11. Other than FiS, are there any other hauora/health and wellbeing initiatives that are influencing this school's approach to the 4 health areas? (e.g. *the healthy eating NAGs; Healthy Kids tool kit for schools; HEHA nutrition fund*)

Looking to the future

12. If the funding for fruit stops, are you considering other ways of providing fruit? What are these?
13. To what extent do you think this school has the relationships, supports, or processes in place that will enable you to develop approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing in the longer-term?
 - What are the key things that are in place?
 - What support or structures are needed?
14. Do you have any longer-term plans in regards to hauora/health and wellbeing and the 4 FiS health areas?
15. Do you think exploring the new curriculum will prompt any changes to this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?
16. Is there anything else you would like to say about FiS and this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?

**Classroom teacher interview questions
Fruit in Schools case study: 2008–2009
NZCER/HOI**

School-wide approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing

- 1) What priority is placed on hauora/health and wellbeing and the health curriculum at this school? How is this visible?
- 2) Have there been any changes in this school's overall approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing or school practices since you started FiS?

Classroom approaches to the 4 health areas

- 3) How does this school approach the Health and PE curriculum? (*e.g. A school-wide plan?*)
- 4) How do you focus on each of the 4 FiS health areas in the classroom?
- 5) Have you made any changes to classroom or curriculum activities since joining FiS?

Students' experiences

- 6) Could you tell me about the ways students are encouraged to take a lead in hauora/health and wellbeing activities, or take action in the school or community?
- 7) Have you seen any changes in students' attitudes, knowledge, or behaviour that you think are to do with the changes this school has made in the 4 health areas?

Working with parents, whānau, and the wider health community

- 8) Do parents and whānau contribute to hauora/health and wellbeing activities in your classroom or at your school? What are the range of ways they contribute? (*e.g. as part of a hauora/health team, to the classroom programme, for sports or other activities?*)
- 9) Have you had any contact with people from outside school who are assisting you to develop approaches to the 4 health areas?
 - What organisations do these people come from?
 - What are some of the changes that have happened as a result of these partnerships?
- 10) Have you attended any PD that is connected to FiS or the 4 health areas? Was it useful?

Looking to the future

- 11) To what extent do you think this school has the relationships, supports, or processes in place that will enable you to develop approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing in the longer-term?
 - What are the key things that are in place?
 - What support or structures are needed?
- 12) Is there anything else you would like to say about FiS and this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?

**Parent and whānau interview questions
Fruit in Schools case study: 2008–2009
NZCER/HOI**

Changes at school

- 1) Could you tell me about the work you have been doing with this school around hauora/health and wellbeing? Have you been working on things to do with these areas?
 - Healthy eating
 - Being active (like sports events, games, or kapa haka)
 - Sunsmart (protection from the sun)
 - Smokefree/auahi kore
 - School gardens or environmental projects
- 2) Could you tell me who you have worked with at this school (e.g. teachers, students, other parents or whānau, or people like Public Health Nurses)?
- 3) Have you noticed any changes to this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing in the last couple of years?
- 4) Can you give me any examples of things you think are working well about this school's approach to hauora/health and wellbeing?

Making connections with parents and whānau

- 5) Some schools find it hard to get parents or whānau involved in school activities. What are the things this school does well about encouraging whānau to be involved?

Changes for students and whānau

- 6) Could you tell me about any ways this school encourages students to take a lead in things to do with hauora/health and wellbeing? (*e.g., students could be on the health team, fruit monitors, coaching others, or running school gardens.*)
- 7) Have you seen any changes in students' attitudes, knowledge, or behaviour that you think are to do with this school's focus on hauora/health and wellbeing and Fruit in Schools?
- 8) Is your family doing anything differently at home as a result of this school's focus on hauora/health and Fruit in Schools?
- 9) Are there any other things you would like to say about your work with this school, or this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?

**Student Focus Group interview questions
Fruit in Schools case study: 2008–2009
NZCER/HOI**

1) Student leadership/health teams

At school you may have been involved in leading or making decisions about things to do with health and wellbeing. You could be: [PROMPTS]

- a member of this school's health team (*PROMPT: use team name*)
- a Physical Activity Leader (PAL), a coach for younger students, or a fruit monitor
- working on school garden, worm farm, or recycling projects

1a) What sorts of things have you been leading or making decisions about? (*PROMPT: Do brainstorm for the range of activities the group has done*)

1b) Have you made any changes to the way things are done at this school?

1c) What knowledge or skills are you learning from this?

Learning in the 4 health areas

At school you may have been learning about these 4 areas. (*Show prompt card*)

2. Healthy eating: [*prompt with card*]

I would like you to think about how you learn about healthy eating, and ALL the things you do at school about healthy eating.

a) Have you done any activities about healthy eating at school?

What are ALL the different sorts of things you have done? (*PROMPT: Brainstorm for range in class time and whole school events*)

b) Has learning about healthy eating made you CHANGE what you do or what you think? You could have made changes at school or at home. What sorts of things have you changed?

c) Do you learn about healthy eating outside of school? What sorts of things have you learnt? Where did you learn this?

3. **Being active:** *[prompt with card]*

Now think about how you learn about being physically active, and ALL the things you do at school to be active.

- a) What are ALL the different types of physically activity you do at school, or ways you learn about being active? *[PROMPT: Do brainstorm for range]*
- b) Has doing active things or learning about being active made you CHANGE what you do or what you think? You could have made changes at school or at home. What sorts of things have you changed? *(PROMPT for changes.)*
- c) Do you learn about being active outside of school? What sorts of things have you learnt? Where did you learn this?

4. **Protection from the sun:** *[prompt with card]*

Now think about how you learn about staying safe from the sun, and ALL the things you do at school about being sunsmart.

- a) Have you done any activities about staying safe from the sun at school?

What are ALL the different sorts of things you have done? *[PROMPT: Brainstorm]*

- b) Has learning about staying safe from the sun made you CHANGE what you do or what you think? You could have made changes at school or at home. What sorts of things have you changed?
- c) Do you learn about staying safe from the sun outside of school? What sorts of things have you learnt? Where did you learn this?

5. **Being a non-smoker:** *[prompt with card]*

Now think about how you learn about the effects of smoking, and the things you do at school about being smoke-free.

- a) Have you done any activities about smoking at school? What are ALL the different sorts of things have you done? *(PROMPT: Brainstorm for range)*
- b) Has learning about being smoke-free made you CHANGE what you do or what you think? You could have made changes at school or at home. What sorts of things have you changed?

- c) Do you learn about being smoke-free outside of school? What sorts of things have you learnt? Where did you learn this?

Family and whānau connections

6. Have parents or other whānau like aunties or grandparents worked with you at school on any of the things we have just talked about? Which things? *[Use prompt card]*. What sorts of things did family do?

Summary questions

7. Have most of you been at this school for a while? Thinking back over your time at school, what have been the MAIN changes you have noticed in the last couple of years to the way things are done in these 4 areas? *[Use prompt card]*.
8. Why do you think it is important for young people to know about these 4 areas, and how to stay healthy?
9. From all the things you've done at school about being healthy, what are the things you've learnt the MOST from? Why did this help you to learn?
10. This is the last question. Is there anything else you would like to say about the different ways you learn about being healthy at school?

FiSC interview questions
Fruit in Schools case study: 2008–2009
NZCER/HOI

1. How long have you, or another FiSC, been working with this school?
2. Could you give me some background to your work with this school? When did you first start working with the staff, and what sorts of things have you done since then?
3. Could you tell me who you have worked with at this school (e.g. the lead teacher, all staff, students, or parents and whānau?)
4. What other agencies or people have been supporting this school to develop their approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing? What changes have happened as a result?
5. Are there any other changes this school has made, in the last couple of years, to approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing? Are these changes connected to FiS?
6. Does this school have any current or future priorities in the 4 FiS health areas? Do you know the reasons these areas were prioritised?

Students' experiences

7. How are the students at this school encouraged to take a lead in hauora/health and wellbeing activities, or take action in the school or community?
8. Have you seen, or heard about, any changes in students' health-related attitudes, knowledge, or behaviours that you think are to do with changes this school has been making as part of FiS?

Making connections with parents and whānau

9. Does this school have any ways of forming connections with parents, whānau, or local iwi that have been particularly successful?
10. Could you tell me about the ways this school uses parent and whānau knowledge and skills to work on areas related to hauora/health?

Looking to the future

11. If the funding for fruit stops, is this school, or the local cluster, considering other ways of providing fruit? What are these?
12. To what extent do you consider this school has the relationships, supports, or processes in place that will enable staff to develop approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing in the longer-term?
 - What are the key things that are in place?
 - What support or structures are needed?
13. Overall, what things are going particularly well at this school in regards to hauora/health and wellbeing and the 4 FiS areas?
14. Is there anything else you would like to say about FiS and this school's approaches to hauora/health and wellbeing?